# HUNGARIAN TALES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE LETTRE DE CACHET.

[illegible] ère et généreuse ; l'appui de ses souverains—le

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT-STREET.

1829.

# PREFACE.

The Hungarian nation, ancient and picturesque, and peculiarly characterized as it is, appears to be at present little known, and perhaps still less cared for in England. Our indifference is singularly ungrateful; for there is scarcely a European country in which the Anglomania rages more fiercely than in that slighted land.

The Hungarians are fond of attempting to prove a national resemblance between themselves and the English; although, as a wreck of absenteeism, Ireland might surely afford them a closer parallel:—but

all who are acquainted with the *morgue* and presumption of the Magyar character, can appreciate the compliment intended by the expression of such an opinion. The English language has been of late years extensively cultivated among the higher classes; and the names of our popular writers and artists have become "familiar in their mouths as household words." The portraits of Scott and Byron, and engravings after the works of Wilkie and Harlowe, are amongst their most common domestic ornaments. I should however be understood to allude simply to the inhabitants of their chief cities,—of Presburg, Pesth, Ofen, or Caschau: for the provinces still remain in the lowest state of mental and moral degradation.

At the University of Pesth, there is a professorial chair for the English language, with a liberal endowment. It is at present filled by an intelligent Frenchman, a soldier of Napoléon's army,—who has compiled in Latin for the use of the students, an English Grammar, Dictionary, and other class-books, which have been

honoured with the commendation of the critics of Göttingen. The works first placed in the hands of the scholars of Pesth, are the Vicar of Wakefield, and Shakspeare's comedies! But the writings of Scott, Byron, and Moore, with some of our best periodicals, are in extensive circulation; and I had the gratification of finding, in January last, the "Keepsake" and "Forget-Me-Not" of the new year, on the counter of a bookseller at Pesth; where, as the last fashionable novel, I was presented with Lord Normanby's "Matilda."

Nor are our manufactures less appreciated. I noticed that *bobin't*, or English bobbin-net was lavishly distributed upon the dresses of the recent Carnival; and that the price of five hundred florins, *münz*, or fifty guineas, was affixed to a set of Staffordshire crockery in a warehouse in Buda; while the most beautiful Vienna porcelain was valued at a third of the sum. The sign of "the English Lord" adorns several distinguished tailor's shops in the Capital, — typified by the effigy of "a fine gay bold-faced villain,"

in top boots, a hunting frock, and a brown beaver; or in an imitation of Werther's costume.

I venture to record these unimportant circumstances, to shew that while our sole or chief acquaintance with Hungary is derived from Dr. Bright's excellent volume, there is scarcely an event of English life,—a folly of London fashion,—or an invention of British industry,—which does not find admirers and commentators and imitators, among the Hungarians of respectable degree.

Since the publication of the work to which I have alluded, fourteen years of peace and tranquillity have done much towards the amelioration and advancement of a nation, which can scarcely claim more than to be considered as a connecting link between the *barbaresques* and civilized Europe. Pesth,—the modern capital,—is extending its Regent Streets and Waterloo Places, along the banks of the Danube; and requires only a permanent bridge to form, in its union with Buda, one of the finest cities of the Austrian states:

—a city exhibiting in the ancient walls of Ofen the dignity of historical interest; and in the opulence and activity of her modern rival, a cheering instance of commercial prosperity. It seems probable indeed that, should some change occur in the policy of the Austrian cabinet,—Hungary, with an amended constitution, may claim that place among the nations of Europe from which she has been so long degraded. Were I to describe more fully the condition of this unhappy land, and the oppression by which it is daily polluted, I might create feelings of very painful interest in its favour; but I am aware that my limited acquaintance with the language of the people, and my ignorance of the classic tongue far more familiarly in use among them, might betray me into exaggeration.

The same consciousness, and the same apprehensions, have perhaps tended to enfeeble the sketches to which I have presumed to prefix these general observations. I would on no account incur the charge of being "*plus Arabe qu'en Arabie;*"

but should I even now be taxed with such an error, I can only reply that the greater number of the following tales were written in the country they affect to describe;—or, borrowing the language of Athalie, and the emphasis of Duchesnois, answer in my defence, "*Je l'ai vu!*"

# CASSIAN:

## A TALE OF PESTH.

# CASSIAN

## CHAPTER I.

Part with these humble thoughts, and fit thyself
To the noble state I labour to advance thee;
Or, by my hopes to see thee honourable,
I will adopt a stranger to my heir,
And throw thee from my care;—do not provoke me.
*A New Way to Pay Old Debts.*

A DULL autumnal evening was closing over the Danube, and its cheerless gloom began to spread itself through the vast saloon of one of the most splendid mansions of the modern capital of Hungary. It was a propitious hour for a *confidence;* and the Baroness Zeriny, laying a detaining hand upon her son, who had been about to profit by the darkness of the chamber, and the seeming *rêverie* of his lady mother, to steal from her presence, broke silence by observing in a tone

of affected interest, "your father, Cassian, tarries late; pray heaven that no mischance may have detained him on the road."

Cassian Zeriny, suspecting that this observation formed the mere outwork of more important ground, was careful to frame his reply in the most listless manner. "My father hath been heretofore used to perform this journey alone; he is now, madam, the companion and protector of a young and delicate girl. My cousin Iölina doubtless requires more consideration, and longer periods of rest than my father hath been wont to bestow upon his own needs. They left Trieste but on the"—

Madame Zeriny cared little for the date or duration of the journey. The name of Iölina had afforded her the hint on which she had armed herself to speak; and intently observing her son, she answered with an air of firmness: "true! I had forgotten the claims of your father's brother's daughter,—of the orphan niece whom Joséf's indifference to the interests of an only child is about to force on my endurance. Let me however forewarn you, Cassian, ere you

become an inmate in the same house with your young cousin, that common propriety requires the renouncement of all childish familiarity between you. Iölina will be known here as the Demoiselle Zeriny;—as such I must request you to address her."

"Certainly, madam, if such are your commands. But will not this new reserve on my part, dear mother, appear to arise out of the altered state of her fortunes?"

"Cassian, these idle delicacies are unbecoming the object to whom you would apply them. Iölina is a mere child."

"She is seventeen, mother."

"But unformed,—uncharactered."

"She is artless and light-hearted; for until very lately no cloud had passed over her head to sadden the impulses of a cheerful disposition. But Iölina is equally spirited and intelligent, and will not be insensible to any slight that may seem urged by her dependent situation."

"I perceive she is not unprovided with a partisan. But, my dear son, previous to your cousin's arrival, let me assure you that the

usages of society will render the tone of youthful companionship established between you, highly indecorous. I trust to see it give way to distant and becoming respect."

"*Respect!*" reiterated Cassian, as he thought of the girlish playfulness with which Iölina had been wont to welcome his arrival in her father's dwelling.

"In short," continued the Baroness, waxing indignant at the repetition of her words, "in short, Cassian, it is fitting you should be aware that your father, in charging his household with a portionless niece, does not destine her for a wife to his son. Already our fortunes have received sufficient injury, and our credit sufficient degradation at her father's hands;—therefore be assured that on my first observation of any undue intimacy between you, Iölina will be rejected from my society,—deprived of her uncle's protection,—and cast out to shame and poverty. Ill indeed would it further my views for your future aggrandisement, that you should fall in love with a low-born beggar.

"That I *should* fall in love!" thought Cassian.

But this time he discreetly forbore to repeat his mother's phrase; and although he marvelled much at the want of discernment betrayed in the injunction, his astonishment remained secret and silent. There was, in fact, no longer any *condition* to be admitted into the affair. Cassian Zeriny already *loved*, or *did love* his young cousin with all the vehemence and sincerity of a first affection. He had been permitted, from his earliest years, to accompany his father on an annual visit to Trieste; where his uncle, the father of Iölina, was settled as an opulent merchant; and on every returning summer he had found her rising into the pride of beauty, and intelligence, and grace. As the heiress of Ferdinand Zeriny's supposed wealth, she had long been an object of interest and competition among the rich and powerful of her native city; and Cassian trembled lest on his succeeding visit to the shores of the Adriatic, some project of high alliance might be announced to him. Sometimes he imagined that an understanding existed between their fathers, and that they were destined to re-unite the branches of the family tree. Oftener still,

he fancied that Iölina herself betrayed a deeper regard for "my cousin Cassian," than for any of the *numerous suitors*,—*the penniless princes of* Tuscany and Lombardy,—who were willing to weigh their mouldy parchments against her father's florins. But his season of pleasing doubts was soon to end; the visionary splendours of Iölina's destiny were blighted for ever; and "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream!"

Joséf Zeriny, the father of Cassian, was the elder and only brother of the merchant of Trieste; nor did the twin sons of Ægeon display a closer affinity in person, or a greater disparity in character and pursuits. They had been early associated by their parents in one of the higher walks of commercial life; had been furthered in their prospects with equal liberality; and, as long as they had adhered to a common interest, had equally and honourably prospered. But the careful forecast and deliberate judgment of Joséf, found itself ill-assorted with the sanguine, speculative turn of his elder brother; and they agreed, although on terms of perfect amity, to separate;—Joséf to pursue his plodding, unob-

trusive industry in his ancient house in the rising city of Pesth;—Ferdinand,—profuse and courtly and magnificent as the commercial lords of the Rialto,—to settle himself in Trieste. There, extending the foreign intercourse,—not only of his house, but of his nation,—he sent forth his spreading sails into all the ports of the East; and beheld with pride the quays beneath his palace windows, groaning under the cargoes they bore as tributes to his feet.

Joséf, the cool keen calculator, had defied the influence of every softer attraction, in order to ally himself with one of the most ancient and influential houses of the Magyar nobility; Ferdinand,—the enthusiastic visionary, had taken a dark-browed Italian into his bosom; portionless and obscure, but beautiful as the inspirations of her country. Joséf retained, however, the frugal habits of his forefathers, nor lived as though he would aspire to rise above their fortunes. He dwelt in the same dull, obscure house of business which had laid the foundation of his father's opulence; and affected to follow the same monotonous routine, and to share the same unwearied

diligence, without presuming to forestal one hour or one circumstance of that ease and enjoyment which might eventually crown his labours.

But Ferdinand exulted to see the stately *portico* of his villa reflect itself in the tideless waves of the blue, glassy Adriatic; to hear the voluptuous swell of music steal through its white arcades, or lose itself in the recesses of the orange groves. It cheered the hours of his mercantile drudgery to know the needy artist cherished by his protecting benevolence, and the indigent man of letters sheltered under his hospitable roof. He knew his coffers to be exhausted by his numerous ventures,—he even feared his credit to be precarious. But what then?—his friendships were secure—his funds were safely vested in the gratitude of his dependents,—and he believed his speculations to be thriving into success. The next changeful wind might waft back from either India one of his mighty caracks; the next hour might crown the efforts of one of his gigantic projects, and repay with countless usury a long arrear of lavish expenditure.

The consequences of this rash spirit of enter-

prise must readily suggest themselves. The winds and the waves did their usual part of "ungrateful injury" towards one who trusted them too largely; agents proved fraudulent; projectors, mere visionaries;—familiar friends withdrew their countenance, and the dark frowning aspect of adversity filled its place. The world looked coldly upon the falling fortunes of the splendid merchant whose prodigality had shamed its meanness; and just as his beautiful daughter had grown into womanhood, and begun to replace his lost wife in his affections, Ferdinand Zeriny, the Medici of Trieste,—died by his own hand, a bankrupt and a beggar!

Those who had hastened his end by desertion and calumny, were not slow to sate their rapacity and satisfy their claims at the expense of his orphan child. All that he had, was indeed justly forfeited. His glorious specimens of antique sculpture,—his pictures—the best treasures of his elegant opulence,—his massive plate,—his acquired lands,—the vessels which lay with drooping pennants motionless and uninformed within the harbour, as though they mourned the

ruin of him who had launched their early promise upon the waves,—all were shared among the rude claimants; and Iölina might have lacked the shelter of a decent home, had not the plodding industry of her uncle Joséf already reaped its reward, and his kind heart destined some portion of its benefits to fall upon her desolate head.

Although the greater part of his acquired wealth had been applied to commercial purposes, to the construction of factories where the discoveries of science were adapted to the furtherance of existing arts, until the gorgeous tissues of his looms, aided by vicinity to Italy, and by competition with the fabrics of Turkey, became the boast of Eastern Europe,—Joséf no longer exhibited that rude parsimony which had marked his early progress. His ancient mansion had been exchanged for an hotel of beautiful architecture, and princely dimensions; whose courts and conservatories vied with those of the noblest mansions in Vienna. His limited household had been expanded into one of liberal luxury; and the gentle blood of the Baroness Zeriny had obtained admittance, or sufferance, for her ob-

scure husband in the highest circles of Hungarian pride. Joséf, in short, the prudent Joséf, had seen the scale of his fortunes predominate, in proportion as those of his brother had been depressed. All was changed with him, except that strong mind, and that upright heart, which had been prompt to rejoice with the incautious Ferdinand in his days of prosperity, and which were the first to sympathize in his downfall, and to deplore his untimely end. That fatal end was indeed the first announcement of calamity which reached the ears of Joséf; for the pride of the unfortunate Ferdinand, or some better feeling, had induced him to withhold all knowledge of his reverses from one who might have been tempted to alleviate his distress, without regard to the interests of his own family.

No sooner did the fatal intelligence reach the elder Zeriny, than he hastened to Trieste; in order to extend the rainbow of peace and promise among the dark clouds overspreading the destiny of his niece, which it was now too late to dispel. He loved her indeed with an affection secondary only to that which he felt for

his only son;—he loved her for her own, as well as for her father's sake;—and although circumstances of various kinds had recently occurred to alter his views respecting the union of the young cousins, he hesitated not to offer her the sacred protection of a father, and the security of a permanent home. Nor can it be doubted that the *Demoiselle Zeriny, deserted and afflicted* as she was, welcomed with eager gratitude such cheering prospects. She was content to leave a land where the destinies of her father had been crushed, and his name calumniated. She cared not for the blue skies of Italy,—she grieved not for the fragrance of its blossoms, or the mellifluous flattery of its accents;—she thought only of that mother-country which had fostered her father's childhood, and of which his renouncement had been a signal of error and misfortune. And there, even in that forgotten region of obscurity and barbarism, she panted to find a peaceful home, or a quiet grave.

With such expectations, and soothed by the gentle moderation of her uncle's demeanour, Iölina forsook the land of her birth. They traversed

the dreary marshes of Croatia; in whose desolation the creeping tortoise, and the pelican flapping its wings against the rustling reeds, alone abide. The cry of the bittern makes their music,—the feathers of the heron, their riches; and Iölina gazed upon the rude and threatening aspect of their scanty human inhabitants with dismay. She observed that her uncle, as well as his *heiduck* and *jäger,* was armed with more than ordinary precaution; and when the *postmeister* of a lonely village insisted upon their taking a circuitous route, in order to avoid a tract infested by robbers, or as they style themselves in Hungary, *szegény legeny* (poor fellows), she looked wistfully towards Zeriny, and inquired whether the road they were travelling, afforded reasonable grounds for such alarm.

"The country you are about to inhabit," he replied, "and which I trust, dear child, you may learn to consider your own, will suggest many such inquiries. We are come of a rude race, Iölina; a race of warriors, whose foot hath been forced to rest in the stirrup, and whose hand upon the sabre, in order to resist the incur-

sions of the barbarous tribes by which we are surrounded. Turks and Tartars, Moslems and Idolaters, have equally retarded our advancement in civilization, by impeding the cultivation of those arts of peace which form the true wealth of a prosperous nation."

"But you speak, dear uncle, of the troubled days of the olden time."

"Remember, that so recently as the year 1682 the Turks had possession of our capital; and since that period, since the gratitude entertained by the Hungarians towards Leopold the first, for rescuing them from the Turkish yoke, rendered their crown hereditary in the house of Austria, we have been deprived of the advantage of an independent government, and of a resident sovereign. Such, Iölina, are the mischances which have prolonged the existence of feudal law in Hungary, long after the causes which suggested its adoption have ceased to exist. The Hungarian nobles, in affording their land personal defence against invasion, as well as maintenance for her armies, might fairly claim exemption from the ordinary duties of a citizen, and

the subsidiary taxation of a subject. But thanks to Providence, the banners of war have long been furled; and peace demands protection, in her turn, for the sons of her commonwealth."

"My dear father hath often assured me," observed Iölina, "that since the abolition of villanage in Hungary, the condition of the peasants has been greatly ameliorated, and that the emperor Joseph II., in rendering back to the nobles the rights of which he had deprived them, insisted upon the retention of that protecting edict so important to their vassals."

"The *urbarium*, or contract between lord and peasant? True, Iölina; nor is it upon the labouring classes that the injurious effects of the existing constitution fall the most heavily. You are aware that during the early troubles of the kingdom, when its monarchs were constantly harassed and driven from their capital,—their revenues impoverished,—and their resources exhausted,—a grant of nobility afforded their only means of exciting or rewarding the loyalty of their subjects. Thus whole districts were enno-

bled at once. You will find that my herdsmen and miners, and domestic servants are noble, and have a voice in the legislature of their country; while their master, although assuredly their superior in education, wealth, and liberality of sentiment, is for ever excluded therefrom, and must remain classed below them in the scale of national estimation. Yonder untutored savage, who is driving the plough, wrapt in his undressed sheep's skin, hath, I doubt not, a patent of nobility in his pocket; which would not only sanctify any insolence he might be pleased to exhibit, but enable him to opine in the senate of the county; which secures him from arrest, ay, even in case of murder,—until the crime be *proved* in three several courts,—and even when proved exempts him from capital punishment, and renders himself and his successors free from taxation or tribute of every description."

"It is then upon the middle class that the burden falls so heavily?"

"Even so. In extending the commerce of my native city, I have had to combat every difficulty that prejudice and pride, and a vicious Constitu-

*tion could throw in my path;* and although the fruits of my industry pour a ten-thousand fold richer tribute into the Hungarian treasury than is exacted from the united nobility of the kingdom, yet am I stigmatized as worthless to the state; and am liable to be insulted, reviled, smitten, by those whose brutality is authorized by the law of the land. You will not wonder then, Iölina, that a class so heavily oppressed,—the extensive and valuable class of middle life,—should exhibit the stains of the fetters they are so ungenerously condemned to wear; that they should remain obscure, unaspiring, ignorant, and unpolished; and that the magnats should fly from all contact with so degraded a society. You will find Absenteeism to be the prevailing evil which retards the civilization of our ancient kingdom, now alas! reduced to the degradation of existing as an Austrian province. All the leading nobles whose opulence and enlightenment might aid the advancement of their native land, carry their splendour and their costliness to the foot of the Emperor's throne. The mightiest names of Hungary now belong to Vienna."

"But surely Pesth retains a sufficient number of the magnats to form an honourable society?"

"We have, indeed, many noble lovers of their country settled among us, in patient expectation of the dawning of a brighter day. In Buda, where the court of the Palatine affords them some shew of favour, they are still more numerous; and in Presburg, whose vicinity to the Austrian capital insures them higher refinement, and lighter pleasures, the ancient hotels of the nobles are permanently occupied. But, generally speaking, the magnats fly from the impoverished aspect of that wretched country which owes its miseries to their predominance; and which requires but equal administration, and a liberal constitution, to take an honourable position among the nations of Europe."

"You have, I perceive, in compassion to my terrors, withdrawn my attention from the original question," observed Iölina. "May I again inquire whether these districts are truly so perilous to travellers as report avouches?"

"The Croats and Sclavonians are a rude race," answered her uncle. "Their native lords pre-

sume not to travel unarmed; for they know that oppression and destitution have made their vassals desperate. We have now, however, nothing to fear. Yonder village is Stuhlweissenburg,—all that remains of the ancient residence of the elective kings of Hungary,—of the superb *Alba Regalis.*"

"The constant incursions of our barbarian neighbours," said Iölina, "must have been, indeed, fatal to the interests of antiquity."

"They spared nor monument nor archive. We are equally destitute of written literature and of historical records. But you are tired, love," said he, interrupting himself, as they entered the paltry town, or rather village, once so celebrated under a royal name, in the Hungarian annals; "tired of my homily, and of your journey. We will rest here for the night."

They drove accordingly into the three-sided building, whose *piátza*, extending round a court, announced the inn of Stuhlweissenburg. An external staircase, and balcony ornamented the inner wall; at the foot of which, the waiter—booted, and spurred, and mustachioed—was

lounging in easy negligence. Several tame storks were stalking through the filth of the court-yard, and digging their long bills into its mysteries of dirt and rubbish. The disorderly air of the establishment, and the careless coolness of its directors, afforded to the weary travellers just as repulsive a reception as may be met with in every inn of every road in Hungary.

## CHAPTER II.

And, oh! 'twas torture to my breast,
To meet thine altered eye;
To see thee smile on all the rest,
But coldly pass me by!

LAMB.

CASSIAN was not present when, late on the following day, his father presented to the Baroness, with earnest and solemn tenderness, the young stranger so interesting to the feelings of both. Had he, indeed, witnessed the warmth with which Madame Zoriny welcomed her charge, and the eager interest with which she fixed upon her those piercing eyes which were destined to penetrate her most secret intentions, he might have been deceived into the belief that her adverse sentiments had yielded to the soft and bewitching loveliness of the fair Italian; or he might have been pained and alarmed by the

unsuspecting confidence with which the young girl threw herself upon the protection of her stern relative, as if secure of meeting there with the sympathy of perfect love; — as if intent upon yielding and receiving the fondest duties of consanguinity and affection.

When at length he entered the saloon, Iölina was scarcely so much surprised by his altered demeanour towards herself, as by the cold and unendearing distance maintained between his parents and their only child; and she blushed deeply when she recalled to mind her own Italian warmth of address. During the first embarrassed and perplexing evening they passed together, a thousand trifling incidents pressed upon her notice the constrained coldness of his manner towards her; and grief and mortification began to mingle with her astonishment.

"He was not thus," thought she, "when his coming brought joy and exultation to my father's house. The fairest gifts, the sweetest sounds, the kindest words, were ever reserved for Cassian. When he departed from us, I seemed to live but till he came again; and though he spake not to

me of love, like the giddy lordlings who wore away the tediousness of their useless existence by their waste of importunities for my hand, still methought he loved to dwell with my father in the confiding tenderness of an unacknowledged son; and with myself, in all the unspoken but intense attachment of an affianced lover!—Methought it needed not words, nor common vows, between us; so closely was our happiness entwined together. But Cassian is altered,—sadly altered. His open smile is gone,—his frank address is tamed into conventional forms,—his very voice is qualified by a monotonous propriety. And can it be that these changes have been effected by my diminished fortunes? Can he,—whom prosperity should have elevated above such base considerations,—can he who hath so often—so warmly, reviled them in my presence, stoop to the control of such degrading calculations?—Let me not judge him hastily."

But the morrow, and the morrow's morrow, and every succeeding day came and went without varying the even tenor of his conduct, or enabling her to affix a more flattering character

upon his views. He conducted himself towards her with the most chilling deference; nor referred by look or word, to their former intelligence. It is true he saw her only in company with his parents; for her uncle, from the moment Cassian had been old enough to supply his place in his commercial department, had exacted the most unwearied diligence from his son; and had himself given way to habits of indolence, apparently the result of over-action and exhausted faculties.

Nor did the consciousness of assured prosperity, or the knowledge of the thriving condition of his well-administered speculations, tend for a moment to enfeeble the old man's love of gain, or his anxious *surveillance* of Cassian's delegated authority. It seemed, indeed, as if his absorption in worldly cares must be suggested by some invisible motive, and directed to some especial and momentous object.

And there did indeed exist a latent intention in the frugal and active industry of Josef Zeriny. From his earliest hour of manhood, he had cherished one powerful and overcoming passion, —stronger far than that of avarice. His love of

gain was but as the vessel in which he trusted to steer towards the harbour of his hopes;—and gold lived in his estimation but as a material of *which to shape the rounds of ambition's airy ladder. The stain of ignoble birth had long* rankled in his heart; and the proud man's contumely, to which he believed it to expose him, was sufficient to overcome in his mind the consciousness of superior abilities,—superior wealth, —superior excellence.

In Hungary, as it is well known, the honours of nobility are marketable. The crown lands of the *Banat*, by which they may be conveyed, afford too valuable a source of revenue to the Imperial treasury, to admit of much delicacy, or much scruple, in their distribution; and although financial foresight might suggest that the exemption from taxation conveyed among their privileges, affords an important counterbalance to the immediate advantage insured by their disposal, yet the beggarly account of empty coffers in the royal chancery, urges the Emperor to overlook all such contingencies, for the sake of immediate relief.

Zeriny, bent upon securing the distinctions thus attainable, had not lost sight of a single object likely to forward his views. He had allied himself with a noble family which scorned and rejected his name, even while feeding upon his fortunes; he had sought a wife whose hereditary rank had not only dignified his homely household with her selfish and vain-glorious pride, but had sanctioned his personal obscurity in the minor circles of the nobility of the kingdom. His own merits,—his influential connexion with the mercantile interests of his country, as well as his position as representative of a county, had already secured him the countenance and favour of the Archduke Joseph, the Palatine of Hungary; and by his recent renouncement of all personal interference in commercial duties, and by his gradual re-appearance in domestic society, he was anxious to obliterate in some measure the impression of his mean origin and early condition; and to ingratiate himself into the favourable interpretation of that high class of Magyar pride, into which wealth alone may perhaps purchase admission, but where personal

favour and esteem become necessary in order to render the place thus secured, honourable and susceptible of enjoyment.

In these views, in this intense desire of family aggrandisement, Zeriny was more than seconded, —he was restlessly impelled—by his ambitious wife. The manufacturer and merchant of Pesth had only to efface the stain of his birth, and involuntary ignominy; but the Baroness sought to redeem an act of self-degradation,—an ill-assorted marriage; and to accomplish so valuable a purpose, she would have been contented to sacrifice her heart's best feelings,—her mind's best principles;—and to include the happiness of all around her in the venture.

If Zeriny hesitated, *her* decision overcame his scruples;—if his diligence relaxed, *her* taunts roused up the slumbering demon by which he was possessed. The gilded bauble, the ideal coronet which she represented as the key by which all the better joys of existence, and all the dignities of social life, were locked from his participation, floated ever in his mind like a redeeming symbol; by night, it disquieted his dreams,—by day, it

stimulated and fostered that spirit of avarice which seemed to inform and animate the most trifling and indifferent of his undertakings.

Had this congenial pair,—Zeriny and his restless Baroness,—been contented to sacrifice their ease, their peace of mind, their own Christian duties, to the accomplishment of a single worldly project, the penalty would have been theirs to pay, as the joy would have been theirs to attain: *and they lacked not judgment to weigh the price against the real value of the object. But their* intentions and renouncements did not end here. The child of their bosom was to be sacrificed to Moloch; his affections were to be set at nought, his tastes and principles disregarded, in order to secure an alliance favourable to the furtherance of their projects.

So long as Iölina had presented the promise of uniting a splendid fortune with their own, they had been satisfied to observe the growing attachment of the cousins, and to overlook the want of dignity of her parentage; but no sooner did the daughter of the merchant of Trieste become the daughter of the bankrupt-merchant, than they

saw in her claims, only those of an indigent niece; and the beauty, and talent, and purity of mind they had been wont to extol, became offensive to their views, and consequently worse than indifferent in their estimation. They mutually resolved that an alliance with some branch of Austrian nobility, which might be content to redeem the faded lustre of an impoverished line by bartering rank and influence against aspiring wealth, would alone serve to fulfil their expectations; and the Baroness, who had hitherto found in Cassian a submissive deference to her will, undertook to determine his intentions on the subject.

With her, indeed, the ruling passion,—mighty as the brazen serpent of the wilderness,—had power to overcome and absorb all other feelings. It was not so with her husband. The kindlier influences of nature were obscured, but not effaced, by his ambitious views. "My brother's memory is sacred to my heart," said he to his wife, as he departed for Trieste, "and if I find the happiness of yonder fair child involved in her attachment to my son,—let the barony go

hang;—I will none of it, if it must be purchased with tears and heart-break. If their mutual love prove other than the vague fancy of childish infatuation,—if my brother's daughter cherish a true and fervent affection for Cassian, they shall marry, though the crown of Hungary were the forfeiture!"

The sight of that brother's daughter,—of her gentleness,—her loveliness,—and above all, her tears, and timid reliance upon his protection,—soon appealed to the better feelings of his heart more powerfully than he was prepared to resist; and her artless conversation, and the manifest docility of her character, confirmed all his predispositions in her favour. Before he reached Pesth, he was more than half inclined to yield at once to the first expression of Cassian's inclinations; and to trust solely to the power of his gold for the accomplishment of his purposes. But the altered demeanour of his son, his apparent coldness towards his cousin, and the calmness of Iölina, whose feelings were still horror-struck and chilled by her father's misfortunes, wholly absolved him from further scruples of

conscience. The cousins no longer sought each other's society,—no longer interchanged the ordinary caresses of kindred,—the common salutations of regard; and the old man congratulated himself that he had not been premature in the disclosure of his disinterested decision in their favour. The Baroness watched and favoured the progress of his delusion; and exulted in the success of her machinations; while the fair and unfriended Iölina unconsciously became the tool of her intentions, as she was destined eventually to be their victim.

It is a cheerless thing for a young heart to be uprooted from its native soil at the moment when its expanding fibres are about to cling to surrounding objects for support and happiness. Its early friendships are condemned to wither, ere their blossoms have permitted the rich fruit beneath to burst into maturity;—its early hopes are doomed to be diverted from that fair future on which they have so long loved to dwell; and memory becomes the only power of mind whose gifts are precious, and whose cultivation is consoling.

Iölina, just as her character was beginning to assume the firmer texture of womanhood, found herself torn from the haunts of her childhood, and deprived of the visionary splendours which had rendered those haunts and that childhood bright as a fairy dream. She found herself removed from the "sweet south," to feel the blast of the Hungarian deserts chill her shivering frame; she found herself removed from the fond cherishing of affection, to feel the still deadlier, still more penetrating coldness of human indifference pierce the inmost recesses of her afflicted heart. She was constrained to kneel in a strange temple,—to seek the services of a strange household. The suffrage of a new society was to be won,—and she who had been so long courted and caressed, had now the dull task of life to begin anew; without an aim for her cheerless endeavours,—without the support of one approving smile.

And her task *was* cheerless indeed! The contracted minds of the higher classes of Hungarian society, owe no expansion to the influence of education; and their remote and secluded posi-

tion admits not of that communication with other and more enlightened countries which might render their views more liberal, and their selfism and exclusiveness less revoltingly evident. The high-born dames of Pesth saw only in the portionless niece of their *tolerated* friend, the Baroness Zeriny, a bankrupt merchant's beggared daughter; and in that character, her talents became importunate, her beauty vain and valueless, and her gentleness, a mere characteristic of the subdued humility becoming her station in life.

But what was their insolence — their ignorant meanness, — what was the indifference of the phlegmatic Baroness, or even the silent abstraction of her uncle, compared with the unexpected estrangement of Cassian? What she had been to him, — how kind, how conciliatory, how fervently faithful, — what she had trusted to find him to herself in her hour of need, — tender, and firm, and encouraging, — what she now beheld him, — stern, and silent, and indifferent; — these were the contrasts which occupied her heart; which perplexed, and grieved, and bewildered her comprehension; till she coldly withdrew her

faith in earthly excellence, and turned sickening from the empty hollowness of the world.

Cassian Zeriny was, in fact, of an irresolute and vacillating nature. Had his moral courage equalled his personal bravery, or his strength of feeling,—or *had a well ordered education directed* the transient gleams of high and ardent spirit which shone through the feeble gentleness of his disposition, he would have better estimated his importance to his parents, and would have made it felt by boldly vindicating those rights of nature, and those principles of honourable independence, which no parental authority can entirely supersede. He would have urged the claims of her whose affections they had themselves prompted him to seek, however he might have felt content to sacrifice his *own* happiness to their will. But, like all of his nation and degree, he had been educated at home, in lonely scholarship; and his mind had been overloaded with the dry erudition of his pedagogue, while its faults and weaknesses remained uncorrected by the example and influence of fellows and comates. The confidence of early friendship had

not taught his reserved nature that bold frankness which so well becomes the candid impulses of youth; nor had an enlarged communication with the miniature world enabled him to strengthen his judgment, or to estimate the character of those pursuits, of that end and aim, to which the views of his parents were directed in his behalf.

The displeasure of those parents had been held up as the supreme terror of his early years; and he had been rarely called to the presence of his father, unless to receive chastisement or admonition. Is it then surprising that the force of habit should have prevailed?—that the maturity of the heart should have preceded that of the mind? and that Cassian,—accustomed to consider his mother's will immutable as the Median law, should have shrunk from *braving* an authority he trusted to *disarm* by submission,—when the threatened penalty of his rebellion was to be the destitution and ruin of his friendless cousin?

In complying to the letter with his mother's artful injunctions, Cassian reserved to himself the privilege of loving—in *silence*;—but in sincerity and truth. Satisfied that no other suitor could

approach Iölina, and that no change of sentiment, or accession of joy or sorrow on her part, could escape his daily notice, his humble nature prompted him to attribute her pale cheek and tremulous voice to the affliction of an orphaned child, rather than to the influence of secret attachment. He little dreamed that his unhappy cousin, too deeply imbued with her mother's national susceptibility to wean her heart with ease from its youthful affections, too richly gifted with her father's Hungarian pride to betray one feeling of disappointment,—to allow one pang to reveal its bitterness upon her countenance, or suffer one accent of despair to mar the sweet music of her voice,—he little knew that the canker was eating into her heart; and that of her daily devotions, her prayer for release from life and sorrow, was the most fervently repeated,—the most constantly renewed.

"There are *none* now who love me," thought she, "few whom I love. This northern climate breathes harshly on my bosom,—I knew not that its breath would prove so rude; for when my father spoke of Hungary, it was with the par-

tiality due to the house of his infancy; and when Cassian loved to describe the scenes and the character of his native land, it was in terms so flattering — so captivating — so different from any that reach me now!" And Iölina continued to revert to the opinions of her lost father, and of her estranged lover, till her recollections rested upon an old domestic of the family, an Hungarian nurse, who had fostered the childhood of the two brothers; and whose old age was sustained by their liberality. She remembered how diligently she had prepared, under her father's direction, a little stock of comforts and remembrances for Mariska, on every succeeding visit made by Cassian to Trieste; and she blushed when she recollected how many weeks she had been an inmate of her uncle's house, without even inquiring whether the old woman still survived.

It was some relief to the loneliness of her heart to find that Mariska resided under the roof of Zeriny; and with feelings of grateful interest and kindliness, she resolved to seek out this faithful follower of the fortunes of her family. "She will pity and console me,—counsel me, perhaps,"

thought Iölina; "and even a word of kindness were a welcome gift to one so wretched,—so *bereaved,—so hopeless as I am.*" *And, preceded* by the Walachian boy who served as page to the Baroness, she mounted to an upper story, and entered the remote and neglected chamber of Mariska.

## CHAPTER III.

How well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world;—
Thou art not for the fashion of these times.
*As You Like It.*

THE chamber into which Iölina Zeriny was ushered, appeared not only dreary and dismantled, but tenantless. As she approached the casement, however, to admire the vastness and variety of the landscape it commanded, a shapeless mass of garments raised itself into action from an adjoining seat; and the visage of an ancient Hungarian dame, wrinkled and haggard, but brightly intelligent, suddenly confronted her own.

Old Mariska retained with careful exactness all the details of her strict national costume; although her leathern jerkin, garnished with

black lambskin, hung loosely round her shrunken waist; and her uncovered white and scanty hair was gathered into braids as carefully as though those coifless tresses still boasted their original raven hue.

"I have waited for thee, maiden," said the old woman sternly, and without offering any token of respect, as Iölina graciously approached her. "Thy father's daughter might have marked that there lacked in her father's hall, the fosterer of his infancy; *I* have gone further,—ay,—and toiled more heavily to do *him* service, than thou, to-day, to do *me* grace; although thou pantest and weariest so daintily from thy exertions."

"I have indeed been neglectful," answered Iölina pleadingly. "Pardon me, Mariska, for his sake who is gone from us; for his sake, aid me to amend my fault. Now that I have learned to know thine abode, the way will appear easier and shorter."

"Callest thou that Southland courtesy? No matter, girl!—Thy father, who taught himself to scorn the land, and the language, and the customs of his ancestors, was pleased to give thee a

mother whose smooth accents might gloss over the rude frankness of plain Hungarian speech."

"Mariska!" interrupted Iölina, somewhat reproachfully, "the words of my father were aught but rude or graceless when he delighted to tell me of the mother of his youth. He spake of her kindness, of her forbearance; of the noble sentiments with which she sought to inspire his young mind; of the national pride with which she had refused to share his splendid home, in a foreign land;—but he warned me not to expect a harsh reception at her hands."

The iron brow of the old woman relaxed from its rigidity at this expostulation.

"Sit there!" said she, pointing to a low stool by her side, and taking her distaff into her hands, while Iölina obeyed her imperative desire. "Sit there, and tell me how the world looks upon the orphan, in her hour of shame and poverty. Sit beside me, child," she continued, passing her hand tenderly over Iölina's graceful head, as she perceived the tears excited by her stern welcome stealing down her cheeks.

"Thou has a glorious prospect here, mother,"

said Iölina, anxious to find an indifferent subject for conversation; "a fair prospect, and fresh breathing; and the ancient walls of Buda shew from hence with dignity. The proud palace—the arsenal—the convent towers—the cliffs of St. Gerhardsberg—the bold mountains by which their outlines are relieved, are fine objects for daily contemplation."

"I, at least, love to look on them, my child; as I love to dwell on all that recalls the better fortunes and prouder days of my native country. Buda is the last tower of Magyar strength."

"I had learned to believe," said Iölina, "that as a fortress, its strength was inferior to that of Comorrn, or Temeswar, or"—

"Thy lowland tongue," answered Mariska, "hath a more literal sense than ours. I spake of the old fortress in reference to its power over the mind—to its influence over national feeling. I know that we are a lost people,—sunk in bondage and obscurity,—mere tributary slaves of the most slavish of empires. But when I look upon yonder palace, Ina Zeriny, I remember that its walls contain our last and proudest trophy of past

independence, — even that sacred crown which his Holiness vouchsafed to expedite from the city of the seven hills, unto our canonized king !* Yes ! child," continued Mariska, raising her skinny finger towards the towers of Buda, behind which the setting sun was darting a thousand dazzling rays, " Yes, child ! blessed indeed are the eyes which rest daily and hourly upon the hallowed walls which guard the regalia of Hungary."

" And thou hast other and more enlivening objects wherewith to divert thy solitude. The gay city at thy feet, good Mariska, of which the busy hum riseth so cheeringly;—the wide Danube beyond, with its dancing waters, and its line of passage, peopled even more fully than its shores."

" There spoke the daughter of the merchant of Trieste. *Thou* prizest the noisy quay, the wrangling mart, the chaffering and the tumultuous interchange of base traffic. But I," said Mariska, " who can boast of higher descent, and am come of gentle lineage—I, blessed be Saint Stephen !

The crown of Hungary was presented by Pope Sylvester to St. Stephen.

have not received the degrading axioms of the Zerinys, with those wages of servitude which have been sparingly doled out to me by their hands. Mariska's mind, rude though it be, and barren of worldly lore,—is yet untainted by the plague-spot of avarice; and she cares more for the silent streets and grass-grown courts of yonder city of desolation, than for the upstart wilderness of shewy warehouses in which her dwelling is appointed;—ay, even cumbered as it is by the gorgeous habitations of those men of mud who are contented to secure by pen and pack-waggon the red gold which my fathers would have scorned to win, save from their enemies with naked blade,—or with pickaxe and lever, from the teeming breast of their common mother. Ay, ay!" muttered the old crone to herself, as she fiercely plied her spindle, "Lipto and Kremnitz are fain to let their ores bear the impress of an Austrian addle-head;—while the Hungarians must learn to seek their hard share of worldly pelf from the slippered infidels who frequent their fairs, or the traders from Fiume and Venice who covet their rich possessions."

"Thou must indeed have remarked many changes in the land," observed Iöfina Zeriny in a firm voice, although something intimidated by her virulence. "Thou hast seen a new city,—a new metropolis,—bear witness to the independent industry of thy countrymen; and since the ancient days of Hungarian pride may not be revived,—those days when the sword, and the buckler, and the eternal harness of war, prevented our young men from applying their strength to the exercise of the humble, but useful arts of peace,—since we must perforce be contented with the sway and protection of an alien government and foreign prince, let us rejoice that we are learning to cultivate within ourselves, that knowledge and those energies which impart honour, and strength, and influence unto other nations."

"God,—our maker and theirs,—in gifting us with so much he hath been pleased to withhold from them, willed not that we should compete with them for so degrading a superiority. I have, as thou sayest, seen many things,—many that have grieved me; and none more sorely than the reeking of chimnies, and whirring of

brazen wheels within our city, which tell me that the hands of my countrymen are at length applied unto those base uses which have been hitherto the portion of the German hounds who wander hither to batten on the offal of our land."

Iölina waved her head, but would not irritate the old woman by opposition.

"I am idle to waste such words on thee, Italian child of my master's house," resumed Mariska; "for they whose bread thou breakest, they in whose hands the tissue of thy destiny is weaving,—are among those whose prosperity and expectation lie in the success of such undertakings. They tell me, lady, *that* tissue is no longer of golden threads; and that thy rising sun, which brightened many a dawning hope, hath set, ere its meridian hour, in the dark clouds of adversity."

"They tell thee true, my mother," answered Iölina calmly. "I am now destitute and unfriended; and therefore is it that I come in confidence to claim thy goodwill. Thou wilt forgive me that my father renounced his country, and sought

fortune in foreign trade,—for I am landless and penniless as the stauncher sires of my race;—thou wilt forgive me, Mariska, that the blood of an Italian mother flows in my veins,—for I am now an orphan, in a land that disowneth me. I dwell here uncared for, as though no anxious interest had watched over my cradle,—as though no tie of kindred bound me to those by whose charity I am fed."

The withered woman laid her distaff across her knee, and gazed stedfastly into the countenance of her young companion, as if to decipher her inmost thoughts. But the tears, which hung in heavy drops upon Iölina's dark lashes, disarmed her inquisition; and once more she imposed upon her head the hand of encouraging tenderness, as she replied, "*Not* uncared for, Ina! There is one of thy race to whom thy merest glance is dearer than the light of heaven;—*Cassian* loves thee, child."

"Cassian!" exclaimed her attentive auditress, starting at the name. "What shouldst thou know of him, here in thy solitude? Cassian, who is of so cold and reserved a nature, can have

conceded unto none the power to read its mysteries. No, no! they who said it deceived thee dear Mariska; or rather, the feeling which they construed into love hath vanished with the golden dreams on which it fed. Nay, more;—the shame of conviction,—the shame of being forced to mark that he sought my affections with views so base, hath taught him to withdraw even such common courtesies as kin and womanhood might claim for me at his hands."

"Cassian *loves* thee, girl!" persisted the old dame. "I heard it from eaves-droppers, such as never yet bare false witness; I learned it from domestic traitors, who are ever forward to break trust! I marked it in a changeful cheek, I heard it in a failing voice,—I read it in the restless, captious peevishness of absence. When he was wont to pay me a visit of adieu, ere he departed annually for the shores of the Adriatic, his step would come bounding to my chamber, and his joyous words would gush from his lips, free as the Danube's waters. But when he wended hitherward again, and bore me back thy father's tributes of remembrance, how came he,—

how spake he,—how looked he? Slowly,—coldly,—anxiously, Iölina! He would stand, even where thou standest, beside the casement, and strain his eyes towards the far south, as if yon mighty plain parted him from his heart's best treasure,—and speak to me the while of his uncle—of his gorgeous palace—his tasteful magnificence. He would tell me of thine Austrian city,—and its ports, and its prosperity; he would tell me of the Italian breezes that wander thither, and of the sweet smile with which summer gazes upon that blossomed realm; and straightway would he turn unto the cold monotonous wastes of his native country, and gaze wearyingly upon all around him."

The lady Iölina seated herself again at the feet of the beldame, and leaned her head against her trembling knee.

"But of *thee* only spake he not," resumed Mariska. "Thy name was never uttered, until I would question him concerning thy well-being. At my first word, the congealed spring would burst in torrents from the rock; and he would

place himself beside me,—even as thou dost now, and tell me how fair thou wert, how wise, and how good; and that at the gates of the Piarist's church, the maimed and the sick would fall down before thy coming footsteps, as though an angel passed; and that"—

"Peace! kind flatterer," said Iölina, smiling, and hiding her blushing face. "Seekest thou to convict *me* also through the self-betrayal of cheek and voice? But labour not to steal my confidence,—Mariska, as a free gift it shall be all thine own. I loved him in those days,—dearly loved him;—and believed myself sure of his affections; and in this sweet hope, mother, princes pressed their suit upon me in vain. In the highest pomp of my prosperity I had no prouder aim than to be his, when it should please him to demand my hand!—And when importunate friends gathered round me at my dear father's death, and told me that I was now poor as well as friendless, the word had no horror for me. I felt sure, firmly and proudly sure, of the possession of one devoted heart. Judge then whether

I have a right to loathe this ostentatious dwelling, in which I am harboured from fear of the world's reproof, and in which I first marked the alteration of looks so dear to me. I have trembled, in other days, under its passionate expression; and now the mists of a wintry sky shew not more chilling."

"Go to, girl!" said Mariska with an air of motherly chiding, "Cassian's is not an age for such base worldliness. The Zerinys, it is true, are a race who would coin their blood for ducats; but he,—I will own it, though I abhor the tribe he springs from, and the commerce to which he is devoted,—*he* hath an open hand, and an open heart; the young eaglet of the Krapaks flies not more proudly in the brightness of day. No, no;—Cassian hath better feelings in his bosom than those of thine imagining."

Iölina kissed the hand of her comforter. "It is sweet to find my former thoughts thus re-echoed,—it is consoling to hear him thus commended; but neither thy praises, mother, nor my own inclinations can longer deceive me.

Since I have dwelt here in Pesth, Cassian hath rarely accosted me, and with a shew of mere distant courtesy. No morning greeting hath ever been between us, no interchange of thought or"—

"By the pleasure of the Baroness, who hath other views for her son.—I *know* the boy. From his early years he hath been the redeeming pledge of my devotion to that race in whose hard service my life hath withered. When my foster-son thy father quitted the land, I was about to withdraw me from his brother's household; for the noble Magyar blood that fills my veins, rebelled against the yoke of the proud woman who had been set over it. But Cassian was already born;—the boy loved me,—sought to me,—and ever insisted to hear from my lips the legends of his native land; and to repeat after me such stern lessons of national honour, that I soon learned to fix my hopes upon the growth of the young tree which had sprung up in my desart path. From that hour until now, I have tarried near my nursling, and his happiness and credit have been my dearest hope on earth."

The Demoiselle Zeriny pressed closer to her side.

"And though he is now too old,—perchance too proud,—to seek lessons from my wasted lips, and grant me his confidence in return, yet little importeth Cassian which is a secret in my ears. The Baroness is bent upon wedding her son with a noble kinswoman of her own, whose family influence may further her views. His father seeks the same end by devoting his time and thought to the accumulation of greater wealth, and"—

"And Cassian?" inquired Iölina.

"Hath a gentle spirit, which hath been too roughly tutored to venture upon open defiance. He speaks little, promises nothing, acts with caution"—

"And *feels*, dear Mariska?"

"Be patient, child," said the old woman, patting her cheek. "And now go thy ways; for the Baroness cares not to know thee absent from her observation; and still less, to perceive that the worn out servitor of her husband's house can receive that notice at the hands of others, which her own arrogance hath withheld."

"At least I may return?" inquired the gratified girl, kissing the withered hand which sought her own.

"Return as often as thou wilt, but ever at this hour; for the boy Zeriny visits not my chamber while daylight enables him to serve his father's will. And if I rightly read thy proud eye and open brow, thou wouldst willingly avoid the presence of one who seeks thee not. And so, sweetheart, all peace be with thee," said Mariska, as the door closed upon her visitor, and her retreating footsteps were lightly heard upon the stair.

# CHAPTER IV.

Climb we the cliff,—the summer skies laugh out
More brightly from its heights; and stretched beneath
The mighty vale unfolds its pastures, rich
With waving gold.

COWPER.

NEVER did the *verbiage* of the dull parading Baroness appear so little tedious to Iölina's ear, never did the self-engrossment and abstraction of her uncle seem so little repellent to her feelings, as when she returned to their society, excited by the new hopes and awakened tenderness, arising from Mariska's communication. She no longer resented the unconcern with which she was greeted, nor noted the insupportable monotony of Baroness Zeriny's *côterie*, the sole society in which her deep mourning permitted her to appear. Their faults and weaknesses dwelt in her observation but as those of the

parents of Cassian; and instead of rebelling, as heretofore, against the ceremonious indifference of their demeanour towards her, she promised herself to win warmer regard at their hands by her alacrity and cheerful submission. Hope is the sweetest nurse of forbearance, and the fosterer of many a feeble virtue.

Actuated by such motives, Iölina was prompt to outrage the better feelings of her nature, and to subdue those emotions of filial sorrow which would have retained her in silence and solitude; and the gaieties of the hotel Zeriny began to derive new grace and fresh animation from her presence. The *tableaux* represented in its gaudy saloon, were directed by her taste to assume the semblance of the mightiest triumphs of Italian art;—its concerts were enhanced by the addition of her scientific aid;—its dance became more sprightly, its masque more imaginative, and its general tone more light, and elegant, as Iölina joined in its splendid festivities. Already her charms and her talents had begun to excite the wonder and admiration of the little world around

her; when the Baroness, who read in her unwonted exertions only an artful design to extend her influence over the mind of her cousin, terminated her flattering career by bitter taunts and insulting suggestions.

"The Demoiselle Zeriny had long but silently noticed that a vain competition with the magnificence of the Austrian capital founded the moving impulse of the dull pageants of Hungarian society. "Thus *do* they in Vienna,—thus are the Parisians attired,—thus ride the English" —are the apologetic phrases that burden every lip; and the nation so renowned for its tenacious and barbarous originality, meanly deserts from day to day, those peculiar characteristics which form its only inheritance and distinction.

The Baroness Zeriny chanced to be among the most prominent of those to whom the court of Vienna offered an eternal model,—an object of constant reference and communication. She laboured to make it evident, on every occasion, that her proper orbit lay in that hallowed sphere; and that as she had originally emerged from its

glories, her setting beams must necessarily blend with its refulgence.

"And must I, in sooth, adopt these fantastic tires?" asked Iölina, as her aunt was pressing her to inspect an importation of fashionable finery from Vienna.

"The Archduchess Sophia appeared in a dress exactly similar, at the *fête* of the Russian ambassador."

"I doubt it not," replied Iölina; "but is her authority unimpeachable in Hungary? What though we give tribute to Cæsar, and acknowledge our unworthiness of national independence, must our ancient habit,—our rich garb of Magyar invention, prove a badge of disgrace? We, who are mere women, and have the taste and pertinaciousness of our sex, dear aunt, are we forbidden to exercise them in the very shaping of our garments?"

"You have a happy estimation of your own judgment, Iölina, if you would exalt it above the fiat of the third capital in Europe; and I should further recommend you to rest satisfied with *my* decision in such matters."

"Surely madam," observed Cassian who, with his father, was an unwilling auditor of the Baroness's reprimand, "surely you will not deny to my cousin the poor privilege of vindicating our national independence by retaining the picturesque costume of our happier destinies."

"I would deny to Mademoiselle Zeriny," answered the Baroness, "only such bootless indulgence of wayward caprice, as becomes neither her age, nor her condition."

"You must not, Ina, it it true, expect to find the commercial class maintain that honourable position in Hungarian society which you have seen conceded to its influence in Trieste, Fiume, or Venice," observed her uncle, who was anxious to divert the coarse, and *personal* character, of the conversation. "You must learn, I fear, to repress your expectations of place and preference. The commerce of Hungary, limited as it is by the want of means for exterior communication,—of canals,—of navigable rivers with favourable courses,—and of practicable roads,—hath retained a mean and pedling character

which perhaps justifies the contempt lavished upon all who are concerned in its details. Our land is inexhaustible in natural resources,—although even these are rendered abortive by the evil policy of an arbitrary government:—but in the arts, in scientific manufactures, in all that can add interest and dignity to mercantile pursuits, we are still lamentably deficient."

"I have often thought, dear uncle," said Iölina timidly, "that commerce can assume a dignified character only in a maritime country or city. The constant spectacle of its winged messengers, lifting up their white sails in the sunshine, bearing its mandates into remote regions, and bringing back their tributes to its feet, possesses a redeeming majesty which overpowers the interested degradation of its views. Genoa the superb derived her splendours from the noble merchants whose argosies rode upon her seas;—Venice rose from the Lagoon under a similar agency;—distant England,—where commerce can boast an aristocracy of its own,—owes her prosperity and her influence over the fate of nations to the same

local advantages; and even in the obscure city of my youth, dear uncle, I have seen our proudest and noblest, anxious suitors for the distinctions of commercial life."

Cassian, in whose ears the gentle voice of Iölina wore a charm that enhanced even those of her lovely countenance and graceful manner, listened with delight to the observations of his cousin. He perceived that his father was pleased by the tone of her conversation, so different from that of the languid, vapid exclusives of his mother's chosen society; and he began to chèrish some expectation that Iölina's captivations might work their own way to the heart of his parents. "If they can resist so much sweetness, such gentle resignation of her early claims," thought he, "they must be formed of sterner stuff than ordinary mortals."

On one personage of the Zeriny *coterie*, the gentleness and accomplishments of the young Italian had indeed made a deep impression; but the Princess Betthyani, although disposed to admire, and love, and serve the fair creature

whom she saw so lightly held by those around her, had little influence over the mind of the Baroness, except such as she derived from her honourable position in the world,—from her high birth, and favour with the Imperial family. In Cassian alone, did she find a willing auditor of the enthusiastic admiration which she was disposed to lavish upon Iölina; and his warm gratitude for the distinction marked by the Princess towards a being whom he so loved, without being able to protect and honour, unfortunately imparted a character of sensibility and tenderness to his intercourse with his noble confidante, which gave many a restless and unhappy hour to her for whose sake it had become valuable.

Iölina, who read in the devotion of her cousin to the young and lovely Sidonia, only an indication of libertine attachment, was induced to reject the advances made towards her friendship by one whose mere notice had been honourable to her, had it not seemed to be suggested by a sinister motive; and following the unhappy impulse of her evil destiny, she coldly reserved her

esteem and confidence from a woman equally worthy and desirous of both.

In the meantime, the Carnival, with its forced gaieties,—its *redoutes* and Casino maskings,—had come and gone; and to the "six weeks of varnished faces," had succeeded the penitence and platitude of Lent. From the boisterous, the almost insane mirth of Shrove Tuesday, the striking of the midnight bell had subdued the intemperance of the giddy masquers into the sober dulness becoming the season of sackcloth; until the splendid ceremonies of Easter at length terminated both feast, and fast, and penance.

The spring was already far advanced; and Iölina perceived that even Hungary,—dark, flowerless, cheerless Hungary,—hath her season of buds and smiles. The overflowing Danube,—fed by the dissolving snows of the Rhœtian Alps, appeared to sail with tenfold majesty between the towers of Buda and Pesth,—of the rival queens who sought his preference. The islands seemed to float upon the silver waves of the river, upborne by the feathery lightness of their green

and half-foliaged woods;—the vine-covered hills beyond Buda, which the budding vineyards had long tinged with red, now assumed a hue of downy verdure;—and the trim gardens that surrounded the avenue of the Stadt Wäldchen and its elegant suspension bridge, were bright with a thousand flowers. In the conservatories of the *Zerinische Haus*, the "*gioventù dell' anno*" exhibited a still richer portion of its fragrant treasures; and the birds imprisoned in its gilded aviaries began to pour their awakened songs of joy amid the blossoms, as exultingly as though no weary heart ached at the sound;—as though the master whose riches cherished their music, could spare a thought from his empty dreams of ambition to commend its sweetness! Spring was come,—the hopeful, happy spring; and for the first time since Iölina had learned to note its air of triumph in bursting from the bonds of winter, she looked upon its blooming progress with indifference.

Spring was the appointed season for the visits of her uncle and cousin to Trieste; and well did she remember the delight with which she had been

accustomed to hail its early harbingers,—the violets, and the swallows, and the woodbine buds. And those tokens were once again before her eyes; and served to remind her of the lost pleasures which had been so precious but so transient in their enjoyment, when shared with her cousin;—of their rides among the olive groves;—of their evening walks along the marble terraces overlooking the tideless shores of the Adriatic sea,—those terraces where the shadows of the young lovers fell between the moon and the tall pomegranate trees,—where their hearts expanded in sweet converse,—or in silence sweeter still! And such joys, such recreations, such moments of tenderness and hope, had been enhanced and sanctified by the approval of the kindest of parents; and Cassian's devotion had been scarcely less acceptable to her own feelings, than to those of her lost father.

And now, silence was again between them; but not that sweet and happy stillness which is the result of contented confidence. Cassian's commonest salutations were now spoken in a

constrained voice,—and the replies of Iölina Zeriny were scarcely less proudly cold. Were the reception-rooms of the Baroness filled with the mirthful cheer of society,—Cassian had speech, and smiles, and gallantry, for every one —but his cousin! and was she summoned to make sport for the Philistines, by pouring forth her enchanting voice in the appropriate melodies of her own brighter country, Cassian would wander listlessly into another chamber, or affect to enter into eager conversation with some trifler of the circle. It occurred to her that, at times, he even rushed uncourteously past her, as if to touch her garments in rude scorn; and that in the midst of his attentions to the Princess Betthyani, or other of his mother's beauteous guests, he would still uneasily seek *her* eye, as if to insure her observation of these indications of estrangement,—these evidences of levity and libertinage.

Consciousness like this did but strengthen her in the assumed air of haughty indifference with which she parried his attacks upon her patience;

and she had none save Mariska unto whom she could venture to detail her grief and mortification. But when she again attempted to allude to Cassian's many misdoings, the old woman interrupted her by saying, "Could it advantage thee in aught, sweet Iölina, I would read this riddle aright, and give thee a kinder interpretation of Zeriny's actions. But 'twere an ill service to both; for the spring returneth not to its source, and blood should not remingle with its parent stream. Be ye wise then, children,—and look for happiness in alien alliances. Thou, Iölina, art too indolent to find fitting support in Cassian's gentle, timid nature; and he, in seeking a bride upon whose proud scutcheon he may found the future honours of his house, should find it united with a firm and aspiring spirit, to maintain and strengthen the wavering placability of his own."

"But although we are no longer lovers, Mariska, surely we may prove firm and confiding friends?

Mariska shook her head; and the slender thread she was weaving, snapped between her

fingers. "Thus be ye divided, since ye are doomed to part. From friendship unto love, Iölina, there is no return; from love to friendship no step; hatred or utter indifference offer the only exchange for passion."

"And must I perforce content me with this decision?" said Iölina, pressing her slender hands together. "I must,—I must!—for submission is my portion, my allotted destiny."

"Thy portion none may guess, save He whose knowledge is inscrutable," replied the withered woman emphatically. "But if a sybil of fourscore years may guide thy looks into futurity, Mariska prays thee to let thy day-dreams rest upon a nobler alliance than the name of Zeriny can promise. Ay,—Ina,—wed with a magnat,—with one of pure Magyar blood;—for in its fierce tide, fierce virtues abound; and a brave, free, generous spirit can redeem many errors. And now, girl, speak we no more of Cassian; for there is much sorrow, and little hope in the theme."

But this summary edict, while it effectually

silenced her companion, served but to render her cheek more pale, her heart more wretched; till the languor of Iölina's air, and the feebleness of her voice attracted the notice even of her uncle.

"Methinks," said he, as they sat one evening together in his garden, under the long silken blossoms of the *datura*, "methinks this landward air liketh thee not, my gentle Ina; for thine Italian bloom hath deserted thee, and thou seemest ill at ease. Why borrowest thou not the lively cheer and bright glance of thy cousin Cassian; who, during the last few months, seems to have attained a new existence."

Iölina looked down upon her mourning habit in reply.

"I read thy thought, and love thee for it, child;—thy father is not, and should not be forgotten. But thou art not of an age to become so arrant a home-bird, and thy nest wearies thee;—come then and follow me in a bolder flight," said the old man with feeling. "The Baroness joins to-night the circle of the Archduchess; Cassian is occupied in the de-

spatch of an *estafette* to Bucharest;—and thou and I, Iölina, will cross the river, and ascend the heights of the Blocksberg, from whence thou may'st overlook our city and half the kingdom. If the evening breeze upon its summit restore not freshness to thy cheeks, they must be of marble."

"And would they were so, so my heart might be as cold," murmured Iölina to herself, as she arrayed herself to accompany her uncle; and stepping into the barge whose rowers bore his livery, she seated herself by his side, and the vessel was rapidly impelled through the current of the sparkling tide. The old man seemed gratified to find his niece, for the first time, sharing his pleasures. His haughty wife deigned indeed to participate only in his worldly schemes of mutual advantage; and the reserve which his early severity had imposed upon Cassian had chilled all confidence between them. But Ina, the creature of his protection, sharing equally his name and blood, seemed to wait with dutiful affection upon the expression of his inclinations; and as the river breezes brightened her faded

countenance, and the beauty and variousness of the noble scenery around appeared reflected in her eyes, Josef Zeriny looked upon her with more than common interest.

On approaching the opposite shore of the Danube, they observed the gaudy equipage of the Baroness rapidly traversing the bridge of boats, towards the palace. Satisfied to know her niece removed from the vicinity of Cassian, whom she had left in Pesth, she leaned gaily from the carriage, and kissed her hand towards the boat. It was the first time she had vouchsafed so familiar a salute,—her air was even affectionate; and the unlooked-for kindness of her kindred brought a pang of pleasure into Iolina's heart, and inclined her towards them with unusual feelings of gratitude. Small indeed is the measure of kindness which hath power to touch the feelings of the wretched;—I know of no surer assay by which the intrinsic quality of misery may be proved.

# CHAPTER

Tamper not with me,—I can'body forth
A darker plague than thy worst image shews
And yet not shrink. Let me know all: and thou
Shalt give thy plaudits to my self-renouncement
And willing sacrifice.

FLETCHER

THE boat touched the landing stairs, the Britschka was in waiting, and its light Hungarian steeds soon left behind the squalid hovels of the Raïscian suburb and ascended the heights of the Blocksberg*. The road wound upwards through a maze of vineyards; and the valley appeared gradually to widen at their feet, displaying the fertilizing course of the mighty

* The Szent-Gellér hegye, or mountain of St. Gerard, commonly named in Ofen and Pesth as the Blocksberg. The celebrated astronomical tower is situated upon its summit.

Danube towards Neusatz, until its waters vanished in the misty distance. As they mounted still higher, the western hills seemed to recede, mountain beyond mountain; till, having passed the votive chapels scattered over the brow of the Blocksberg, they found themselves compelled to reach the Observatory on foot; and in a few minutes they were panting upon the craggy summit.

Iölina recoiled with horror from the precipice,—to the brink of which she had been betrayed by her curiosity,—from whose dizzy elevation the heights of the fortress of Buda appear confounded with the valley below them. The Danube, alone, retains its mighty majesty when thus overlooked; and while the eyes of the young stranger were stretched to track the windings of its eddying waters, the vast *pusztas*, or grazing farms, which occupy the sandy plain of Ketsckémet seemed spread beneath, trackless and treeless as an Oriental desart. Even the solitary dwellings and mean villages scattered at intervals over its parched surface, served but to add to its air of desolation; and Iölina exclaimed

against its dreary extent, as she seated herself at her uncle's side upon a fragment of rock commanding the bourdless prospect.

"Yet hath it a peculiar boast," answered he; "a boast exceeding even that of its rich fertility. On yonder spot, Iölina, or, as we distinguish it, the plain of Räkosch, the Hungarians of the olden time assembled to elect their sovereigns. One hundred thousand tents of the nobility are recorded to have whitened its dark surface during the season of election."

"Do I not see the gleam of a white portico among the plantations which fringe the borders of its hallowed ground?"

"Thou art gazing upon my own summer palace of Röschatz. *My own*, do I call it? Alas! 'tis mine but as a heavy rent and an absentee lord permit. Art thou aware, Ina, that to become proprietor of Hungarian earth,—save that which finally receives alike both prince and vassal into its cold recesses,—'tis needful to prove as many quarterings as a herald only may record? And I,—millionary as I am,—must fain content

myself with breathing my native air upon the inherited territories of others."

*Iölina looked at him for further explanation.*

*"But a time will come, and I trust before I am lost in caducity, when the Zerinys may presume upon the sanction of the Emperor and of the* Aulic Chamber, to assume that state which, worthless and paltry as it is, hath become a necessary badge of honour, in a land so misgoverned as Hungaria. Yes! Iölina; no sooner shall Cassian conclude his marriage with the daughter of Count Hunyadi, than my grant of lands in the Banat, and the title they convey, will bless me with the fruits of my laborious and frugal life; and raise both me and mine to the distinctions I covet. This very evening, the Baroness receives an audience of the Palatine, in order to seek the Imperial sanction to so flattering an arrangement."

The perturbed blood rushed to Iölina's cheeks, and brow, and burning bosom, at this overpowering announcement; and as quickly left them cold and colourless by gathering round her

oppressed heart. "And will this, thinkest thou, oh! my uncle, bless thee with contentment?" murmured she.

"Look around thee, Iölina," said Joséf in reply. "Look upon yonder many-tinted woods, upon these mountains,—the winding river that flows under their shadow,—and the tufted meadows through which it wanders;—then tell me whether there be any earthly acquirement which gold can compass, that can match with their united glories, works as they are of the Almighty Creator's hand. I have toiled heavily and taken much heed of mine earthly substance, and I am now blessed with great riches; nor is there an object among the fair achievements of art, or a treasure among the inventions of luxury, which I may not make my own. But such are, alas! of small account;—they are base, they are transitory,—they are fashioned by hands of clay;—and so long as I call not flood and fell,—pasture and forest, mine,—my *own*,—I am still poor and ungraced in my own estimation. No!" said Zeriny, trembling from the excitement with which

his eyes gloated upon the mighty territory at his feet; "no! let me but live to know myself the founder of a race, to see the son of my heart take place and station among the inheritors of our ancient national rights, and I shall die content with having so lived, and so laboured! It were worse than death, and worse than shame unto my heart, should any unforeseen mischance frustrate the consummation of my hopes; and my bitterest curse would fall upon all or any whose agency might conduce to my disappointment."

His niece sighed in the submission of despair. The sentence of her destiny had been pronounced; and duty unto the brother of her father forbade her even to grieve over a prospect which he had set forth as the joy and triumph of his existence.

"Be it so!" said she to herself, as the old man departed on a visit to the Professor resident at the Observatory; leaving her, as he smilingly said, to the society of the rooks and angels. "Be it so! my moan shall be soon made; and I will

rest my future hopes of peace upon a more equal land;—even upon yonder sky which laughs over my head as though it shone in mockery. Yet oh! why was I bid to cherish expectations so fruitless,—why was I permitted to nourish an affection so intense, so unavailing!"

She started as she spoke, for a step approached her; and as she turned her head, Cassian himself, in all the pride of manly beauty, and all the exultation of triumph, stood beside the rock in a fissure of which she had sheltered herself from the setting sun.

"I saw you from Mariska's swallow nest ascend the mountain with my father," said he; "and I presumed that under such sanction, I might intrude myself upon you. My mother hath already departed to the evening society of the Archduchess."

This announcement, which was probably intended to convey a simple assurance of security from observation, bore a far more offensive intention to Iölina's apprehension.

"I know it," she replied, writhing with the

effort to suppress her tears; "but wherefore shouldst *thou* announce it.

"Because," replied Cassian, startled by her unaccountable emotion, "I trusted you would the more readily retain me in your presence; and perhaps efface by such an indulgence, the remembrance of the many wretched hours I find myself condemned to endure."

The unhappy girl had now concealed her face upon her knees as she sat; for her quivering lips and burning eyeballs could only have been revealed to betray what pride would fain have suppressed. Distressed and perplexed by her evident perturbation, Cassian now seated himself beside her,—hung over her with irrepressible tenderness,—and began to soothe her with all that gentle devotion of manner, which his low, pleading tones had formerly rendered so captivating. There was not a gentle word, a sweet assurance, which he did not warmly urge to obtain an explanation of her affliction. He sought her confidence as a concession;—he claimed it as a right;—he called upon her as

his cousin,—as his beloved,—as his *wife*, to suppress her sorrow, or to declare its origin.

"Oh! utter hypocrite!" said Iölina at length, unable to subdue her indignation. "Must I learn to despise, ere I can school myself to forget thee? Why shouldst thou pause, Cassian, in thy career,—why shouldst thou one moment withdraw thy thoughts from the success that crowns thy crafty scheming, to waste them upon a lost, lonely thing, like me? I am beggared, Cassian,—I know it;—I am of degraded extraction,—I know it;—I am unworthy to share the burden of thy new coronet,—alas! I know it;—I knew it when I rejected yonder proud Florentine prince, who sought so anxiously to share with me the splendours of his own!—But couldst thou not permit the poor girl to subdue in silence and solitude the anguish of the heart thou hast stung,—to suppress the rebellious suggestions of the spirit thou hast wounded, but that thou must wander hither to insult her with thine airs of triumph? Go—go—Cassian! thy pride will be fed with other

homage,—thy success hailed by other lips;—let mine be sealed as patience or death may decree!"

"Art thou distraught, Iölina?" exclaimed her companion, at once amazed and indignant. "In Heaven's name, who or what hath moved thee to this frenzy?"

"Thyself, Cassian!—thou hast done it;—thou, whom I so loved,—ay, start not at the word,—to breathe it now, injures no modest thought! *Thou* hast done it, who gloriest in telling me that thy haughty mother seeks the presence of the Palatine, but to announce thy broken faith, and approaching marriage with another."

"*My* marriage?—a mere dream,—a peevish fantasy of thine own, sweet cousin. On my honour and faith, there hath not been even speech or project of such a nature."

Iölina detailed the intelligence she had just received from his father; and Cassian Zeriny trembled as he listened to an announcement wholly new and unexpected.

"I would," said he, clasping his hands in his turn, "I would I were the meanest serf that digs for bread in yonder valley, so I might be free from the thraldom of my parents' vain ambition; for verily there lies not jewel or ingot among my father's hoards, which he considers more marketable than my heart and hand. Ina,—dearest!—my friend,—my sweet cousin,—revile me not in so trying an hour; for how may *thy* sorrow be named with *mine?*"

Iölina had now recovered from her momentary accession of anger; nor could she prevent her companion from seating himself beside her in order to claim her sympathy in his distress; or silence those reiterated vows of continued and changeless affection, by which he sought to repay himself for so long a suppression of his sentiments.

"This must not be, Cassian," interrupted she at length. "That sacred promise unto thy mother which hath so long sealed thy lips, may not be broken with impunity; and thy father's declarations have this night torn a veil from my

eyes, till I see and own that we are doomed to part. When I stood beside my father's bloody shroud, Cassian,—judge whether any common emotion could wring that word from my lips,—I felt that my anguish would have been insupportable had not one sustaining remembrance soothed the sorrow of that fatal hour. It was the recollection that during the happy years we had lived together, my peevishness had never thwarted his will; and that the submission of perfect duty had influenced my bearing towards him in every circumstance of my existence. And shall I,—who have proved the consolation of such a feeling,—shall I, dear Cassian, teach thee the sin and sorrow of disobedience, and share with thee an act which would carry death to the hearts of thy parents?—Oh! no;—there is no joy in the indulgence of selfish passion which can atone for such a sacrifice. Cassian! our union is indeed impossible."

"Yet but now, you expressed a far different thought.—Forgive me, Ina, for loving to recall a confession so enchanting to my hopes."

"It was thy seeming insensibility, Zeriny, thy supposed triumph, which roused such unwonted feelings in my heart. I can share with content,—with *pride*,—thy submission to the dictates of virtue;—I can even urge thy sacrifice of selfish considerations; but Cassian's indifference was a far more bitter trial."

"*Thou* canst not have thought me indifferent, Iölina. My father may have deceived himself,—my mother may have trusted to my obedience;—but thou—thou"—

"Cassian, since we are destined to renounce our past hopes,—since another interview may be denied us,—let us not waste these precious moments in vain retrospections, or separate without clearly comprehending the relations which must, in future, subsist between us."

"Speak not so sternly, Ina"—

"I must, I must;—for without firmness how may I achieve my cruel task! Hear me, Cassian," she exclaimed, bending her knees and solemnly joining her hands, "hear me swear that I will never thwart the projects of thy

parents by seeking to cherish or renew the affection which hath been so dear unto both;—that I will never exchange vow or pledge with thee, Cassian, nor receive thy wedded faith;—but in all things strive to forward the views of thy father for thy welfare. May Heaven hear and protect me as I keep holy my oath;—and if I fail,—be its unsparing curse upon my head!"

"Wherefore hast thou done this?" murmured Zeriny, as she rose trembling from her knees, and sunk beside him, oppressed by the solemnity of the appeal she had uttered. "Thou, and thou only, by thy rash vehemence hast put an eternal bar betwixt us!—Now then," said he after a pause, "now then, let me indeed be gone; for I have nothing more to hear or to hope. Life hath closed around me like the untimely darkness of an eclipse."

He arose to depart. "Stay," exclaimed Iölina, "stay Cassian;—say that we are friends, ere thou leavest my side. Stay, and hear one parting word of counsel. Thou art about to encounter

the wide sea of life, Cassian, in a trim and gallant vessel; may thy cousin presume to bid thee beware, ere thou leavest the port? I would not tell thee of rock or shoal,—of shifting winds, Zeriny, or treacherous harbourage; for these thou hast judgment to shun. 'Tis against thyself,—against the bark's wavering pilot,—that I would forewarn thee. Distrust thine own timidity,—vindicate thine own claims;—and let not a conciliatory policy lead thee to procrastinate the consideration of present peril. Thou hast feebly yielded unto thy parents the arbitrary disposal of thine existence, until the prerogative hath twined itself amid their life-strings, and it hath become a sin to rend the knot asunder. But thou,—be thou henceforward sterner of purpose, as thou wouldst be happy, and confer happiness. And now farewell,—cousin Cassian,—peace and oblivion be between us!"

Once and again, Zeriny attempted to speak in reply,—but the words obeyed not his intention. He therefore folded his hands together, and stood gazing upon her he loved in speechless and

agonizing intensity for many minutes. At length the tears slowly stole upon his cheeks;—he knelt down before her,—pressed her garment to his lips,—then rising and bounding down the hill-side, he was out of sight ere she had recovered her powers of remonstrance.

"How is this," exclaimed her uncle, when sometime afterwards returning from his visit, he found her still seated on the spot where he had left her, but in so altered a frame of feeling. Her lips were now discoloured,—her looks haggard with exhaustion,—her hair, scattered to the evening winds. "What hath chanced,—who hath been with thee, my dearest niece?"—a sudden thought enlightened him.

"Cassian hath been here," said he, "and you have spoken together of his marriage."

"We have indeed met;—but only to part, in mutual pardon and compassion. Uncle, we have learned to live henceforth as strangers."

The unbidden tears gushed from the poor girl's eyes as she spoke.

"Iölina," observed the old man gravely, "you

have been too reserved with me. Why is it that I am permitted to witness this vehemence of feeling, now that my knowledge comes too late! And yet,"—he added, "deem not that I undervalue your claims upon me. I swore, as I saw your father's coffin lowered to the dust, that his child should never fail to meet at my hands the tenderness of a parent;—and I will not forswear myself. Say but one word, Iölina,—say that this attachment is essential to your happiness,—say that you cannot resign my son and live,—and I will hasten to the feet of the Palatine,—retract my announcement,—and break off my connexion with the family of Count Hunyadi."

Iölina took her uncle's hand, and kissed it with reverence.—"It is enough," said she; "your kindness disarms even my regrets. Be satisfied, dear uncle, that were all these sacrifices made, an insuperable obstacle, of my own creating, would prevent my marriage with your son. Be satisfied that nothing remains for my happiness, but to forget Cassian."

She took his arm, and slowly descended the

craggy steep towards the carriage; and still speechless from emotion, they crossed the river,—the threshold of their gates,—and parted for the night. Many and contending thoughts disturbed the rest of the Zeriny family ere they met again.

## CHAPTER VI.

> And o'er the ruin rose that strength which said
> With nothing left to hope, there's nought to dread.
>
> BYRON.

"MARISKA!" said the Demoiselle Zeriny, as she entered the remote chamber of the old woman on the following day, with a brow as pale as the sheeted dead, but with a calm and even cheerful demeanour, "they tell me thou art suffering from some grievous indisposition."

The beldame sate rocking herself backwards and forwards, as if to quiet the sense of pain; and her distaff lay idle by her side; but she suspended her movements on perceiving Iölina's approach, and replied with unwonted gentleness, "In spirit, love, not in body;—and they served

me but ill who told thee of my ailment. And thou, Ina! thou,"—

"Of myself," said Iölina, "it needeth not to speak, since an irreversible decree is a bootless theme of argument; and from such, alas! win I my sorrow."

Mariska took her hand with deference, and gazed earnestly into her face. "He is gone, *kintsasó**; at day-break he went hence, and these old eyes will rest no more upon his sweet presence."

"Didst thou speak with him ere he departed; knowest thou whither he is bound?"

"Nor with me, nor with any did Cassian commune in his sorrow; but the common babble of the household runs that his father and the Baroness spake him fair at parting, and mingled tears with his; and that it hath been settled among them that the burden of his affliction will be lightened if borne through other lands, whose pleasures may efface the remembrances of

* Hungarian, *darling*.

home. His *suite*, say they, follow him this night unto Vienna, and his equipages will suit his lofty fortunes;—but what are they to our Cassian, whose mind is dark with other images,—whose whole heart,—but silence, babbling dotard! why should I augment *her* sorrow,—why wish her to deplore a parting and an absence which even myself have taught her to look upon as a rescue from after-sorrow. The beasts of the forest seek not shelter in cave or lair wherein an enemy abideth, and sad is the heart"—

"Iölina," interrupted the voice of the Baroness, advancing into the chamber and graciously saluting her niece, who stood trembling, and absorbed in thought, by Mariska's side, "it was not well to shed thy first tears upon another bosom than mine; trust me none can better appreciate their bitterness, or more admire the generous resignation by which they have been urged."

"I have not wept, madam,—I do not weep," replied Iölina, in a calm low voice. "During many grievous months, I have indeed wept over

the supposed estrangement and unworthiness of him whom I loved. But to-day, I know him to be still true,—still pure and excellent;—I know that he is gone where absence will render our dark and alienated existence less painful to both; I know that our common duty is fitly performed, and I am content;—for what, alas! would tears avail us now?"

"Say it not in that agonized voice, *edes kintsem**;—say it not with those pallid cheeks!" said Mariska.

"Rather," observed the Baroness hastily, "rather weep, sweet Ina, and mingle thy tears with mine, that a luckless destiny parts me from my only son."

"The lady of Zeriny might have spared her tears, by retaining *him* among us who was the light of all our eyes;" observed Mariska, sullenly.

"Would that I had earlier and better estimated the strength of his attachment," replied the

* Hungarian, *dear love.*

Baroness evasively; "or known how firmly his wishes were bent upon an union which the rashness of my niece hath now rendered impossible."

"Fair and false,—fair and false," murmured Mariska, "thou wouldst set a coronet upon his brow, if its circle were to be shaped of metal glowing from the furnace."

"Speak we no more of the past," said the Baroness Zeriny reddening with anger, yet still repressing the suggestions of her fury. "It were bootless to recur to the chances of happiness we have lost; since the vehemence and inconsideration of Iölina have alone rendered them unavailing. Still, however, it shall be my fondest desire to look upon her as my child of adoption; nor can my Cassian's future bride ever learn to rival her in my regard."

She pressed the unresisting girl to her bosom, and gently drawing her from Mariska's apartment, conducted her, with a pompous shew of sympathy and tenderness, into the presence of her uncle; whose swollen eyes and depressed silence, bore witness to the sincerity of his

caresses. From that hour, Joséf Zeriny forbore to name his son in her presence, or to revert to any past events in which he bore a share. He ceased not to treat his niece with the most solicitous affection, and neither himself nor the Baroness appeared to acknowledge a dearer duty than that of cheering and consoling their victim.

Nor was this change of conduct altogether insincere in either. Like other egotists, they had only disliked their *protégée* as an obstacle to their views; and they were grateful to her for the disinterestedness and promptitude with which she had voluntarily terminated the expectations of Cassian, and thus forwarded their projects. They now began to look upon her in a new light, —to recognize her peculiar claims upon their love,—and to appreciate those valuable and endearing qualities which had already insured her the admiration and esteem of those by whom she was surrounded. Every memento that might serve to remind her of the absent one was scrupulously removed from her sight;—his name,—that familiar sound which had formed the music

of her life, was hushed in her presence, save when her uncle occasionally whispered to some visitor, with no unkind intention, that he was well,—and happy,—and enjoying the diversions of the Austrian capital.

It was from an indifferent person,—a comparative stranger,—that Iölina was enabled to obtain a more exact detail of the departure and proceedings of her cousin. From the first day of his absence, the young Princess Betthyani had drawn nearer to her society, and had won her confidence by the frank and earnest warmth with which it was claimed. Sidonia was indeed a being from whom it appeared difficult to withhold aught which her varying fancy might urge her to demand. Diminutive as a fairy, and as a fairy wilful and potent in her influence, her waywardness was more than redeemed by the graceful elegance with which it was exerted,—the disinterestedness by which its aims were directed,—and the gay intelligence which occasionally moderated its energy. Born of one of the noblest Hungarian houses, her national pre-

judices had been tempered by a long residence in more enlightened countries. Her lord had been a favoured ambassador from the court of Vienna to the Emperor of France; in whose polished court her *hauteur* had been softened into the dignity of high breeding, her vivacity into the easy gaiety of good society; and the young and beautiful Princess, the observed of all observers, and the queen of many hearts, had retained amid the blandishments of adulation and the corruptions of a dissolute capital, not only that sprightly originality which was the most alluring of her fascinations, but the unblemished purity of heart whose brightness shed a matchless lustre over her beauty.

It will scarcely excite surprise that Iölinâ's heart was open to the influence of such attractions, and that she sought not to resist the charms she found in the society of one so warmly desirous of making it her own.

"I am your cousin's friend," said the Princess, who had succeeded in obtaining her as the companion of her daily drive in the Stadt Wäldchen,

and now wandered on her arm through its shady avenues. "I know all that hath chanced between you, and I have his commands to tell you so. I have to thank him for his ready consciousness of the interest your appearance and character had excited in my mind, and for his belief of my worthiness to alleviate your present affliction and forlorn destiny. He presumed not to send you through my lips, or parting word or wish;—for he was sensible that he was yet unable to utter any you might approve. But in acknowledging that you had blighted every hope of a dearer union, he bade me seek to win that friendship at your hands which you have withdrawn from himself. He bade me love you,—Iölina;—and that he seemed to consider no mighty labour;—and he bade me teach you to love me in return,—and that, although a weightier task, he named not as a hopeless one. And you *will* love me," continued the Princess, turning abruptly to her companion, and pressing her hands within her own, "you *will*, when you know how truly I sympathize in your sorrow

and how willingly I would aid you to subdue its influence."

"You have already done much, in proving to me that I am not utterly deserted by the creatures of my kind," replied the Demoiselle Zeriny. "Your highness's notice however honourable, is little compared with the consolation of finding that I am not altogether abandoned in my loneliness."

"Know me as Sidonia, or know me as an enemy," answered the Princess smilingly. "Leave we the dulness of etiquette to your lady aunt; it befits the emptiness of her mind, and the coldness of her imagination."

"She is the mother of Cassian."

"A redeeming circumstance! which does not however render her that of the Graces. Pardon me Iölina,—I have an arrear of contempt and detestation to repay to her whose vain ambition hath marred the happiness of the two most highly gifted and sweetest natures which I recognize among my countrymen."

"Yet let our earliest pledge of friendship prove

a request, made and granted, in her favour. Promise me, Sidonia, that the Baroness Zeriny shall never form a topic of discourse between us. So shall we escape the indulgence of many a bitter thought and feeling."

"Have I set a taskmistress over me?" asked the Princess, with a kiss of assent and adieu. "Easier were it, Iölina, to plant the Carpathian chain amid the morasses of my Croatian lands, than to tame my wild speech into moderation."

In the circle of Princess Betthyani, whose husband held the important appointment of *Judex Curiæ*, and whose supremacy over the society of Pesth had been long established, Iölina Zeriny was now enabled to fix her unprejudiced observation upon the higher and better attributes of the Magyar character. She found that the national pride which had been so irksome to her in the exhibition of its barren selfism, could assume a dignified elevation of mind;—that the vain profusion of heartless magnificence by which she had been oppressed, was in truth the failing of only that branch of native nobility

which, having stooped to ally itself with *roturier* wealth, is ever seeking to defend its baseness under the golden panoply for which its pride has been bartered. She saw elegance, and ease, and refinement, unite with the indulgence of literary taste and the cultivation of the fine arts; and those whom she had noted with disgust in the society of the Baroness, as encased in the stiffness of chilling pride and power, seemed to throw off their robe of ceremony on entering the presence of the sprightly and elegant Sidonia;—even as the god of the Heathen heaven is said to have laid aside the splendours of his brow, the better to subdue and captivate a mortal heart!

"I dreamed not of this," said Iölina to the Princess, after passing an evening in the chosen society of her friend, whose lively fancy had been exerted in devising a variety of trifling but enlivening diversions, in the hope to win her from cheerless contemplations. "Where is the rude wildness,—the harsh and haughty egotism I have heard attributed to the character of our magnats?"

I will not deceive you by declaring that such qualities have no existence amongst us, dear Ina; for in the provinces they are still,—alas! the while,—cherished as national virtues. But among ourselves, and the 'men of the world, who know the world like men,' they are hung up with rusty armour and obsolete usances on our castle walls; or, if exhibited at times, 'tis like the drunken Helots of Sparta,—as an exemplary monition. Trust me however that a genuine Magyar nature, though rude and rough as our mountain ore, is equally precious when moulded by the hands of the careful and the wise."

This sentiment, and couched in language equally figurative, was continually poured into the ears of Ilölina, by the ancient and now decaying servitor of her father's house. Her own sense of suffering, and the perplexity of her mind, caused her not to relax, for one moment, in the discharge of those gentle duties by which the sinking frame of the decrepid Mariska was relieved from its pangs, and her spirit from its desolation. The old woman was gradually dying:

and patiently, and even cheerfully, anticipated her end.

"I shall not linger through the summer," said she, "nor do I pine to see once more the ripeness of autumn, or fall with its falling leaves. I was born that my strength might lighten the leisure of those whom my great Creator appointed to a higher degree; and now that my strength hath deserted me, the rest of my days is labour and sorrow. My web is wove!"

"But those, dearest Mariska, who like thee retain but the remembrance of a well-spent life, and of duties diligently performed wherewith to brighten the gloom of their latter days, should not repine that the Almighty delays his summons."

"I repine not, girl! or if I do, 'tis that I may never look again upon the boy Cassian, or learn whether the light follies of other nations have effaced the impulses of his nobler nature, and of his inbred national pride. I fear me the West will long detain him from the plain of Ketschkémet; but when he returneth with his Austrian bride,—nay! I meant not to drive the colour from thy

cheek,—shew him old Mariska's grave; and tell him, *kintzásó*, that it is the sweeter for being dug in Hungarian earth; and that the fosterer of his childhood prays him therefrom to cherish *that* feeling among his deepest and dearest."

"But my cousin will probably soon return," said Iölina, in a consolatory voice.

"Never!—oh! never,—while his eyes must bear to rest upon the form which he dare no longer hope to clasp to his withered heart."

Iölina started;—a new and afflicting light broke in upon her mind!

"But I know that all will be well with him," continued the suffering woman. "With so sweet a nature, with so noble a spirit, evil and sorrow cannot be sentenced to abide. And I know that his race will hereafter rule among my people; and that thou too, fair child of my nursling! will one day name thine offspring by a name of honour; and when the hour of thine exaltation cometh, Iölina,—when thy household shall be appointed in one of the proudest palaces of yonder ancient city, high above the river shore, remember

that the blood of Mariska flows in human veins, and that the daughter of her son is, like thyself, an orphan."

"I dreamed not that kin of thine survived on earth."

"The bower-maiden of thy friend the sweet Princess Sidonia, claims to call me grandame; and if I have cared for my own race less than for that of Zeriny, the fault hath not been in the poor child."

"Iölina was prompt in promising the old woman to befriend her neglected relation; and the assurance that she would take her into her service fell with a soothing influence upon the dying ear to which it was directed. In a few minutes Mariska's head sunk back upon her chair; and her young visitor, believing her to be asleep, stole softly from the chamber. But when her attendants visited her towards evening, they found her posture unmoved; her glassy eye still fixed upon the towers of Buda which she had died in gazing on; and the light of the setting sun glancing upon her cold white face. Mariska rested from her labours—her existence was closed!

## CHAPTER VII.

We were on earth the loneliest things!—
  Two flowers, upon a barren moor,—
Two birds, whose solitary wings
  Seek onward to a brighter shore.
Two stars, upon the summer sky,
  Whose beams delight to blend in one;—
But he is wandering cheerlessly,—
  And I am wearying here—*alone!*

VANE.

THE appalling suddenness of the event, and the many painful remembrances connected with the life and death of the faithful Mariska, combined to oppress the mind of Lölina Zeriny in so fatal a degree, that serious and even perilous indisposition soon confined her to her chamber.

Her sick bed was visited and watched with

assiduous tenderness by those who had conspired to lay her there; but their pompous attentions were disregarded and unfelt, when compared with the unremitting and unpretending kindness of the endearing Sidonia; who stole about with muffled step serving the unspoken wishes of the invalid, like some ministering fairy;—lending all the liveliness of her mind to divert the depression of Iölina's spirit,—and striving, with the patience of true affection, to brighten her gloomy prospects, and to controvert her arguments in favour of a speedy release from her sufferings.

"I shall die, Sidonia!" she would murmur, with parched lips and wasting brow. "Earth hath no further need of one so useless,—so hopelessly wretched. I am withering like a plant on which the sun refuses to shine, and which may not flourish in neglect and darkness."

"Thy simile holds not good, peevish child. Thou droopest in sooth like a flower which, in erring wilfulness, hath crept out of the sunbeams;—such wanderers are not sentenced to wither away, but when replaced in the light of

the morning, they spread forth their leaves in renovated loveliness. And thou, Ina, art stealing back into the smile of the world,—or rather, thou art *sought* by its smile in the shade of thy sorrow!"

"It will scarcely find me.—My abiding place will soon be in the depth of those dark caverns which mortals love not to fathom. I had not thought to shelter me there so early, nor so contentedly; for my youth hath cherished many dreams, Sidonia,—visions of high aspiring,—and such sanguine hopes of unalloyed earthly happiness as bewildered my better judgment.—But are those hopes, forbidden hopes, Sidonia? Is it lawless for a young heart to rest its expectations of joy on dwelling in a hallowed home, with one whose love is sanctioned of duty,—of kindred,—of the Church?—to know no will but his,—acknowledge no aim of existence save the retainment and perfecting of his affection? Is it lawless to sorrow over the blighting of such hopes,—to grieve,—and oh! how bitterly—that they were ever permitted to arise? Tell me, Sidonia,—is

there shame, is there fear in such devotion as this?"

"In such pure and disinterested affection? none,—surely *none!* But to turn away with peevish repining from the consolations of after life, to reject all occasions of happiness,—and leave every appointed duty unfulfilled, *this* is lawless, this is forbidden; and Heaven will, I fear me, judge in its own great day all such abuse of the gracious gifts it hath lavished, dearest, on thyself."

Iölina roused herself to listen. "Thy words bring conviction, but"—

"Hush!" said the Princess, laying her tiny hand upon the lips of the sufferer. "I will not hear thee wrong thy worthier thoughts. Even I, Ina, despite the high-mindedness with which the world reproacheth me, despite the levity which thyself, love, hast sometimes laid to my charge,—I should shrink from the rebellious insubmission by which thou presumest to arraign that Judgment which passeth thine understanding. Nor it is not for such as thou to fly with coward

impatience from the endurance of affliction. Thy hopes, thy wishes are thwarted;—of what else dost thou complain? And who that lives, Colina, from the anointed Emperor, to the loathsome beggar, but can murmur against a similar dispensation? She who is gone in the fulness of years so peacefully to her grave,—whose diligence was so long and faithfully devoted unto the race of Zeriny,—thinkest thou that it was not wormwood to her taste—she, a freeborn woman and noble,—to waste away her being under the tyranny of a mean-minded, pitiful despot, such as the Baroness? That very Baroness herself, with all her gilded waste and empty state, wilt thou not own that so long as the distinctions of nobility are withheld from her race,—so long as she sees Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate, and is herself rejected,—wilt thou not own that the blessings of her lot profit her in small degree?"

"Let us not forget our conventions regarding her, even in the warmth of discussion."

"Of myself then, suffer me to speak unre-

servedly; and thou wilt find that Sidonia's destiny, bright though it appear, hath crosses and cares peculiarly its own.—Just as I was learning to fix my observations upon the usages of the world, I was translated from the obscurity of my own barbarous land, into the polished and fascinating elegance of French society; and, exchanged it but for the more intellectual refinement, the more elevated tone of the British capital. In the highest circles of both countries,—in which the rank of my husband, as the ambassador of Austria, insured my warm acceptance,—I learned to know and admire all that is great, and good, and graceful; and scarcely had I begun to wish that my days might pass away among those enlightened friends who rendered them so enchanting, when my evil destiny recalled me into these savage regions; where my single hand might vainly seek to work reformation, and where my single heart finds little to atone for that which it was forced to resign! I fear I am ungracious,—and I would not be so, Iölina; for I love my country, and only grieve to see her cling to those

obsolete and demoralizing privileges, which render her intercourse so revolting. Perhaps too I estimate myself more highly than I can justify; for I own it grieves me to 'waste long days that might be better spent' in the unintellectual and ungentle society of Pesth. But such is my duty; and I trust it is cheerfully fulfilled. Sure, at least, am I that till this moment I have never given utterance to my secret discontent, and that the Prince my excellent husband is undisturbed by any doubts of my perfect happiness."

"But surely Sidonia will not oppose a mere distaste like this, to a sorrow which is influenced by the most important events of life?"

"Had I said all, I should not venture to measure my grievances with thine; but my greatest affliction, Iölina, remains untold,—my separation from my only, and most beloved brother."

"A brother!—and thou hast never yet hinted his very existence!"

"Believing that under the tutelage of one so genealogically skilled as the Baroness, thou couldst not fail to be perfect in my family annals."

"My aunt is too fully occupied by her own heraldic honours and expectations, to care for the instruction of one to whom such knowledge is likely to be superfluous."

"And thou hast positively held me to thy heart in honest good faith, without so much as inquiring whether I can claim quarterings enough to secure my admittance into a chapter of the empire? Fie! Iölina."

"Unqualified as I am to meet a similar inquiry,"—

"*Basta — basta!* and know me at length for a daughter of Lingotski; for one of a race of heroes and patriots,—or rebels and assassins,—as thy creed may hold."

"Rather as one of that high-minded family, whose feats, whose praises and persecutions, have been hymned in my ears by our poor Mariska ever since Hungarian legends have become dear to me. And this brother, Sidonia, on whose name thou dwellest so sparingly, is it — *can* it be the Count Sigmond who, as I have heard her record"—

"Was banished to his estates by the Emperor, two summers ago, for having ventured to vindicate, somewhat peremptorily, the ancient rights of his free country."

"And who yet remains in exile?"

"He does indeed. For although the original offence was scarcely of so grave a character as to justify a protracted banishment, yet Sigmond's determination to seek no grace at the Emperor's hands, and his imprudent bearing during his season of condemnation, have but served to lengthen and embitter it. A German sovereign is not more absolute in his kingdom than the Lingotski upon his ancient heritage; nor is there an excess or a crime which, at his bidding, his vassals would leave unexecuted. The Emperor, conscious of the mischiefs to which such power might be applied, imprudently seeks to crush by oppression, where he might more easily win by conciliation; and my brother, who is hot-headed, and fierce, and reckless as the wildest of his ancestry, hath been wrought by severity into open defiance of the rulers of our unhappy country.

Himself the most absolute of men,—the inflammatory words of slave and despot, of tyranny and ancient right,—which have been telegraphed from the *Burschen* of Jena and Heidelberg to those of our university,—are ever upon his lips; and excite such terrors in my mind for his future destiny, that at times I scarcely deplore the fate which for two long years hath kept us asunder. There *are* moments, however, when my heart pants after the presence of that absent brother as if it acknowledged no dearer influence upon earth."

"Surely the credit of Prince Betthyani might have availed to mitigate the sentence of the Count?"

"Another subject of sorrow. My husband resolutely abstains from all intercession in his favour; not from want of affection towards Sigmond; for next to our own sweet boy, I know not the living being upon whom his hopes so rest. But Betthyani hath survived the age of romance;—heroic virtues scarcely find favour in his sight,—and heroic excesses and extravagances

provoke his indignation or contempt. He is bent upon lowering the tone of my brother's character into that of steady reason, by proving to him how insufficient are his puny powers of resistance against those of established sovereignty; and by removing him from pernicious and inflammatory influence into the soberness of solitude and reflection."

"With one of so determined a character as I have heard ascribed to Count Lingotski, I fear the expectations of the Prince have hardly been fulfilled. Surely his object would have been better attained, and Sigmond's opinions more seriously corrected, by an extended acquaintance with the tone of general society,—by travel in more polished countries,—by communion with the good and wise of other nations?"

"Little knowest thou of Sigmond Lingotski! That exaggerated sentiment which it is his pleasure to call patriotism, hath long determined him to live and die on Hungarian earth; and the Viscount of a paltry province of this province of Austria, lives in his estimation as a more

elevated being than the reigning monarch of any other land."—

"The ordinary Magyar delusion."

"And now, Iölina, that I have unfolded my chapter of grievances, in its whole selfish and tedious length, tell me whether a sister thus sadly parted from an only brother,—who, orphaned in her infancy,—can claim kindred with no other breathing thing, yet lives without the hope of looking upon his face again,—tell me whether Sidonia Betthyani have indeed no cause for murmuring."

Iölina was about to reply, when the entrance of the Baroness, followed by the solemn man in black whose office it was to assign the condition of the invalid for the day, as worse or better according to his patroness's suggestions,—interrupted the colloquy of the friends. On the present occasion it was her lordly pleasure that the passive leech should condemn the excitement of conversation;—restrict the visits of friends to the sick chamber,—and then, brightening with a sudden inspiration of hope, announce that a

degree of amendment had taken place, which should be immediately improved by change of air and scene; and that in a few days the Baroness must prepare to escort her niece to the baths of Mehádia.

The Zeriny looked duly astonished; and on the whole, enacted her part with much *naïveté* and effect. She suffered her automaton to advance a few ordinary and approved objections, in order that they might be overruled by his auditors; and she finally consented with amiable reluctance, to a plan which had been peculiarly and exclusively her own. Iölina, averse from all exertion, languid and dispirited, was about to plead for delay; when she perceived upon the brow of Princess Betthyani so unequivocal an expression of satisfaction, that she knew not how to oppose a measure which appeared to secure the cordial approbation of her friend. The source of this approbation she however found it difficult to determine; for she knew that the age and infirmities of the Prince rendered it impossible for him to leave Pesth, even

to inhabit his summer palace; and she was equally well aware that no personal temptations would induce Sidonia to desert him to the care of others. Whatever might be the motives of her feeling, Iölina was satisfied that they were good and honourable, and she was therefore content to acquiesce in her wishes. Every preliminary was speedily arranged; and in the course of a few days, the Baroness had the satisfaction of taking a pathetic leave of her husband, and of setting off, attended by an extensive *suite*, upon her long and tedious journey.

Few save those who, for their sins, have been condemned to traverse the most uncivilized countries,—whose curiosity has been directed towards Timbuctoo, or across the wilds of the Andes,—can imagine the inconveniences and mischances attendant on an expedition into the interior of Hungary. Forced to rely for horses upon a *forespann* order,—a certificate obtained from the governor of the district, which compels the reluctant peasant to unyoke his team from plough or

harvest-waggon, to forsake his fields at the most critical periods of agricultural labour, and convey some indifferent traveller to the distance of twenty or thirty miles, without even a stated reward,—obliged to traverse a country destitute of inns or decent food, and upon roads which might evoke the manes of General Wade to define their "whereabout," Iölina learned to look forward to their arrival at Mehádia, as a release from actual suffering.

Theresianopel, whose name sufficiently certifies the auspices under which its foundations were laid, and whose thriving aspect forms a cheerful contrast with the surrounding wastes, afforded the travellers a brief release from the wretched hamlets and degraded provincial towns through which their route was appointed. Here and there a *château*, dark and savage as the *Herrschaft* to whom it gave a name, with the dilapidated walls of its *Thiergarten*, and the overgrown copses of its pheasantry, enlivened the dreary extent of the *Pusztas**, by whose treeless wastes it was encom-

* Pusztas, *cattle-farms*,— literally, *uninhabited countries*.

passed, and displayed in still more revolting prominence, the filthy hovels whose squalor reeked beside its gates. Even the details of rural economy which, in other countries, lend life and liveliness to the varying pictures of a summer's journey, do but serve in Hungary to oppress the observing mind with unavailing compassion for the condition of that valuable class through whose means they are effected. The sign and the sound of bondage prevail through the land; and it is plainly manifest that the hearts of the Pharaohs by whom it is upheld, are hardened beyond the touch of mercy. The sweat upon labour's swarthy brow becomes unsightly, when we know that it flows for a savage taskmaster; and the harvests which spread their golden treasures only to enrich the garners of the mighty ones of the land, forfeit half the claims of their waving beauty.

There are no song-birds pouring out their thrilling music to the early sunshine,—no hawthorn hedges bursting into blossomed fragrance,—no sunny slopes bright with the dazzling hues

of a thousand flowers, or green with the promise of "a dinner of herbs." The monotonous sameness of the villages, and a total want of individuality in the regular and sightly habitations of the formal streets by which they are divided, betray them at once to be colonies formed by the rich for the wretched objects of their exaction and slaves of their will, rather than strong-holds of fair, and free, and successful industry,—such as adorn the woody glades of our own blessed country. So exactly does "half the platform just reflect the other," so precisely is every whitened and reed-thatched abode fashioned like unto its neighbour, and so accurately distributed are the dimensions of the paled stack-yards by which they are divided, that any but the actual inhabitants must be puzzled to ascertain their identity. "New Harmony" might have been built upon the model of an Hungarian settlement; and even the least enthusiastic worshippers of the picturesque, could scarcely gaze upon such dull formality without sighing for a little dilapidation to vary its unmeaning generalities.

At the extremity of the vast plains they were obliged to traverse, the two ladies of Zeriny hailed with delight the stern fortifications of Temésvar,—that terror of the Turkish arms; and having paused within its gloomy walls for rest and refreshment, — till the tuck of drum, renewed "from morn to night, from night to dewy morn," "cried sleep no more to all the house,"— they set forth with renewed courage; and on the following day, reposed themselves in the green seclusion of Mehádia.

# CHAPTER VIII.

Un séjour de bains;—lieu de tõute la terre où les désœuvrés font le plus grièvement supporter aux autres, tout le poids de leur inutilité.

LE PRINCE DE LIGNE.

A GENERAL resemblance,—an air of *con acquinity*—prevails among all bathing places throughout the world;—from Leamington and Brighton, to Lucca and Mehádia. The same pretext of infirm health,—the same indulgence in frivolous diversions in order to get rid of that superfluity of time which the rich and idle have wandered so far to dispose of,—the same busy idleness,—marks the progress of the long, listless summer day.

Indifferent acquaintances are endured in such a region, in consideration of the brevity of the

connexion. Excursions are planned to enliven the dulness of ill-assorted society, whose heavy festivities are barely borne to an end, but which are afterwards quoted as among the unrecallable pleasures of the season. Some doubtful antiquity is visited, and *proné*, and raved over, by those who, in Paris or Vienna, would not desert their *fauteuils* to look upon the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, or muse among the Ruins of Balbek; and connexions the most unworthy are formed in mere self-weariness, and perhaps stimulated by the babbling of calumny into utter shamelessness. Time and money are wasted in the acquirement of toys, the baubles of an hour;—private theatricals, of which the tragedy consists in the martyrdom of the victims under the sneers of their friends, and the comedy in their contented self-exposure,—bands of discordant music, and witless puppets,—a few princes sick of petty sovereignty,—a king or two, flying from etiquette to secret indulgence in coarse pleasures,—two or three countesses weary of home and an empty metropolis, who are gazed at and prated of, until

their names become tarnished and besmirched by constant use,—two or three noble libertines who can but drink deeper, and riot more loudly, and game more lavishly, in order to refine upon their usual course of enjoyment,—and last, and worst, and universally,—*ennui* in the full pomp of his omnipotence;—such are the characteristics of a bathing place!

Although partaking to a degree in all these vices of vocation, the obscure baths of Mehádia can boast of attractions superior to those of their more popular rivals. Their remote locality insures them from the incursions of royal *ennuyés* and *ennuyants;* and Vice—who, when less profusely fed, cares not to display the ostentation of her loathsome aspect,—shuns the seclusion of so remote a region. Dulness is indeed the deadliest sin that can be charged upon the Hungarian Baden; and its picturesque site, and interesting relations with Turkey,—the untutored wildness of its peasantry, and the authenticity of its antiquities as a Roman bath, founded by the Pannonians, offer some traits of originality to

distinguish it from the palling routine of *redoutes* and *tables d'hôte*.

The feebleness of Iölina Zerny's health afforded the Baroness a reasonable plea for withdrawing herself from the general society of the baths; which, to say the truth, partook but indifferently of the illustrious character requisite to secure her interest and participation. The gouty Bishop of Erlau, dull and prosy as the archives of his see,—two maiden Countesses of the Erdödy family, who had brought a paralytic Pomeranian dog to prove the efficacy of the springs,—a distinguished professor of the University of Pesth, whose society would have been doubtfully tolerated in the capital,—such were the personages who were so fortunate as to form the knot of *Zerinische* exclusiveness, and to make up the Baroness's nightly *boston*. But their society was easy and unobtrusive, and devoid of all excitement: so that under the influence of its gentle opiate, poor Ina's faded frame gradually recovered its tone, and her spirit its patience; and so brightly did her sweet looks confirm her

declarations of amended health, that the Countess Maddalena no longer marvelled at the infatuation which, as her friend the Baroness confided to her ear, had induced one of the loftiest of the Magyai to court her refusal of his coronet during the preceding carnival.

But the period of their sojourn in this isolated spot soon began to wax wearisome to one who had so little part in its ordinary diversions as Iölina;—the even tenour of whose life was unenlivened save by occasional letters from the animated pen of Princess Betthyani,—and who missed those casual mentions of the name of Cassian, which the inquiries of their daily visitors in Pesth were sure to elicit for her information and comfort. The monotony of her existence at Mehádia was destined however to an early interruption. In the pause of an arduous deal, the mild Bishop acquainted them one evening that the *réprouvé*, Count Lingotski, was hourly expected at the hotel of the *Churfürsten*, from his *château* on the *Platen See*, or Balaton Lake; and on the following day, the Countesses Mad-

dalena and Dorottya confirmed this pleasing intelligence, by a declaration of having witnessed his entry into the town.

Baroness Zeriny, affecting an indifference on the subject which her intimacy with his sister rendered somewhat suspicious, took no measures of politeness towards the Count; and declared her intention of avoiding all acquaintance with one so out of sorts with courtly favour as Lingotski. By this *manége*, she succeeded in exciting an interest in his favour with her niece; and when on their succeeding visit to the spring, Iölina found occasion to observe the remarkable resemblance between Sidonia and her brother, and to admire the careless grace and personal beauty of the young Count, she was almost tempted to regret the seclusion which removed her from the possibility of becoming better acquainted with one who singularly recalled the image of her absent friend.

If Princess Betthyani's person could claim the minute captivations of a fairy queen, the Count might boast of the same regularity of features, the

same fascinating expression, expanded into a shew of manly dignity; and Iölina marvelled, as she traced the precious resemblance, at the total absence of that fierceness, and that *hauteur*, which she had attributed to the mental picture of her friend's brother. Those who find the leopard sleeping among the flowers of a jungle, are thus tempted to admire the beauty of its spots, and the sleekness of its skin, without terror of its slumbering ferocity!

The young Count appeared unwilling to weaken the favourable impression he had made, by a closer inspection; for during many days, he forbore to profit by that usage of foreign baths which permits the latest visitor to force his acquaintance upon his predecessors; and the Countesses Erdödy were enabled to enlarge every evening upon the relation of his early excesses, to opine concerning his present amendment, and to predict his accession to their select *coterie;* and still, — he came not. *Se laisser chercher* appeared as much his device as that of the Baroness; but the dignity of the latter

eventually gave way to her policy, and she assumed a winning frankness in inviting him to her apartments, "in order to talk of Sidonia, and to abuse the dulness of Mehádia."

Lingotski could not fail to accept the challenge. He came,—and an air of natural high breeding which advantageously replaced in his demeanour the common forms of worldly politeness, completed the conquest he had made of the noble damsels Maddalena and Dorottya,—of the Bishop and the Baroness. But while they were graciously occupied in the examination of his character and address, his own exclusive attention was directed towards the fair and faded creature who took so little share in their officious welcome; and who never raised her eyes towards him, save when awaiting his reply to the Baroness's anxious inquiries after the health of her "dear Princess."

The character of Iölina Zeriny's beauty was indeed rendered doubly attractive by the delicacy of recent indisposition. Her complexion, by nature "*più bianca di giglio*," shone out like snow

against the raven braids that bound her brow;—and her looks, which had been so long shrouded in the wintry mists of sadness, burst like the sunshine of early spring from the clouds of a lowering sky, when called upon by the beloved brother of Sidonia, to speak of *her*,—of her young son, and of their mutual affection.

Count Lingotski was more than commonly open to the power of female fascination. He had been long secluded from all society fitting his degree; and except during one discontented winter at Vienna, he had never acquainted himself with the conventional forms of the great world. But that very winter, that solitary season of dissipation, had done much towards the formation of his character; had inspired him with unqualified disgust for the profligacy,—the shameless profligacy of the high-born Austrian dames who had been rivals for his smiles,—and had determined him to confide the keeping of his honour to more guileless hands, and the rule of his affections to none but the most simple and unpractised heart. In gazing with unreserved delight upon the love-

liness of Iölina, he did not however entertain for a single moment the thought of finding the gifts he held so precious in one of her condition of life. The niece and daughter of the merchants Zeriny held no place in his estimation, save as the ill chosen friend of a sister whom he fondly cherished; and blinded by this delusive view of the subject, he permitted himself to sit long hours by her side,—gazing upon her melancholy beauty,—developing the gentle purity of her character,—and learning, with devoted blindness, the sweetest and most ineffaceable lessons of love.

While he affected to give his attention to the diffuse sentimentality of the Baroness, he continued to hang unobserved over the embroidery frame where Iölina wasted her listless hours,—diligent and silent as a nun; and one look from her intelligent face, when at length she lifted it from her work, appeared to reward his devoted patience. Nor did he lack pretexts for insinuating himself more closely into a society which, without avowing it to himself, he already held

so precious. He affected to discover that the Demoiselle Zeriny's health required a more easy mode of exercise than that afforded by the *char à bancs* of the place; and boasting himself as the most expert and careful charioteer of all Hungary, he was admitted to the honour of driving the Baroness and Iölina in his tiny Britschka; of conducting them to the shadiest spots in the forest, the finest positions upon the shores of the Danube. He obtained permission for them to visit the Turkish island and its fortress; and had the address to become their Dragoman during their interview with its Commandant,—a native Walachian prince;—to whose state apartments they were compelled to ascend by a ladder resembling that of a pigeon-house, and whose chief officers pestered them, even in the very presence of his Highness, for a pecuniary acknowledgment of their trouble in conducting them over the fortifications. It was upon this occasion that the unequivocal signs of personal admiration with which Prince Reidza permitted himself to address the fair Hungarian whose curiosity had

apparently betrayed her into his presence, roused in the mind of Lingotski such feelings of rage and indignation, as served to unveil, even to himself, the true nature of his sentiments towards her; and startled, dismayed, and discontented, he strove for a time to withdraw himself from the danger of her attractions.

The Countesses Dorottya and Maddalena, and the gouty prelate, whose *boston* had suffered material interruption through the caprices and projects of the young Count, began to whisper together, and hint and murmur concerning the views of their dear politic Baroness; and had not poor Ina's retired simplicity and unchanged sadness re-assured them on the subject, they would have been apt to predict a grievous *mésalliance* between the descendant of an interminable line of Magyar pride, and the pitiful *rejeton* of mercantile dishonour. A marriage of any kind filled them with indignation and evil forebodings; and an union like this was calculated to inspire them with a most Cassandrian spirit of prophecy in their confidential correspon-

dence with their friends in Pesth. They failed not to predict a revolution, and the overthrow of throne and altar in Hungary, if such a departure from national usage, and such a breach of aristocratic privilege were sanctioned by public endurance.

In very different terms did Princess Betthyani allude to the report in her letters to Iölina. "I will not conceal from you," she wrote, "that since the dissolution of your engagement with Cassian Zeriny, I have entertained no fonder hope than that of seeing you become the bride of my brother. You are the first and only woman towards whom I have felt as much; nor do I entertain doubt or fear on the subject, save of Sigmond's worthiness to call you his. His faults however are those of his nation; and he has virtues all his own."

The perusal of this lettter failed not to awaken the deepest emotions in Iölina's perplexed bosom; and to direct her attention to many daily occurrences which had hitherto appeared ordinary and uninteresting. But she was now too painfully sensitive to the meanness of her origin and the

poorness of her pretensions, to give much faith to Sidonia's predictions; and in her reply, she pointed out in forcible language to her flattering correspondent, the impassable distance between herself and Count Lingotski, and the insuperable obstacle formed to such a marriage by her own pre-engaged affections. "I trust, however," added she, "that without treachery to him who has cast me off, to him who is too deeply engrossed by the pleasures of Vienna to waste one thought on Iölina, I may acknowledge how much I am struck by the appearance of candour and firmness in the character of my supposed admirer. With Count Lingotski, the sentence of the world, and the vulgar clamours of society, appear to weigh no more than the feeble whistlings of the wind among the branches of a mighty oak. At times I read in his eyes a terrible expression of sternness of purpose, and irrevocability of resolution; and I, who have suffered so bitterly from the consequences of timidity of mind, am perhaps induced to overrate the merits of one of more powerful texture. Have I not reason, dear

Sidonia, to detest all appearance of a conciliatory policy?"

The comments of Princess Betthyani, and her announcement of the prevailing opinion respecting Lingotski's attachment, in imparting to Iölina's address an air of embarrassment and constraint, did but enhance her captivations in the eyes of her lover. It was no great stretch of presumption to attribute the deep suffusion which dyed her cheeks on his approach, to a secret predilection in his favour; and her faltering voice, and the consciousness with which she avoided his society, led him to believe, long ere he had sufficiently conquered his scruples to seek the sanction of the Baroness to his courtship of her niece, that Iölina's heart was all his own.

In the meantime, the Zeriny was not idle in her vocation. Every evening the wondering Dorottya found herself compelled to listen to the eloquent harangues of maternal fondness with which her friend set forth the agonies endured during her separation from an only and most beloved son; which were directed to other and

far more attentive ears. Sometimes the Baroness would extol her own magnanimity in her renouncement of the society of her Cassian; and then, with many tears, lament that a combination of untoward circumstances should have driven him into exile, and destroyed the happiness of his parents;—sometimes she would enlarge upon the happiness and respectability of conventional marriages, and upbraid with indelicacy all voluntary attachments, unsanctioned by the custom of the land, or the decencies of feminine reserve. The Erlau Eminence confirmed her orations by the trite maxims of his dull experience; and the twin Countesses found themselves compelled to add their approving nods to many a striking instance of the varying destinies of first and second love, which time had rendered "labour lost," as far as regarded themselves; and their admiring acclamations, to the fervour with which the Baroness described the inward sense of elevation, the mental beatitude of those who are summoned from a lowly to a high estate, with all its privileges of benevolence and affability.

To such vile cant and shallow arguments, the ears of Iölina were as those of the adder,—wisely stopped; but there were others of a more individual and touching nature, which found her a willing auditress.

"I have no tidings of my son," murmured Baroness Zeriny, after audibly directing the inquiries of her *heiduck*, and publicly receiving his negative. "Five weeks have elapsed since I learned aught of Cassian's movements. Unhappy they who must trust to the caprices of the tides and winds for intelligence of that which is dearest to them upon earth!"

Iölina rose, and attempted by gazing on some distant speck of the atmosphere, to prevent her tears from falling; but the Baroness tenderly followed her retreating step; and after a symphony of heavy sighs by way of *ritournelle* to her plaintive romance, she renewed her strain.

"Princess Ronskalonska was observing to me yesterday as we drove through the forest, that an only son,—one at least situated like mine, rather serves to embitter than endear existence;

and I sometimes fear myself, that my poor Zeriny's grey hairs will be laid in the grave without his being again blessed by the sight of the darling of his old age."

"Is my uncle suffering from indisposition?"

"No love, not at present. But Cassian in his last letter assured me that no persuasions should induce him to return to Hungary so long as,—— that is—till—till another choice had rendered his home—but pardon me! I forget to whom I am speaking."

"You do not forget, madam," said Iölina gravely, but not reproachfully. "You do but remember, well and wisely, to school me to the execution of a difficult duty;—even that of bestowing upon one whose noble disinterestedness might claim more candour at my hands, the boon of a withered heart, and a beggared"—

"Hush! Iölina!" interrupted the Baroness, "I must not hear you thus underrate your claims, and pervert my meaning. When Count Zichy applied to your uncle for your hand, previous to our leaving Pesth, did he, or did I attempt to influence your choice?"

"Count Zichy, madam, is an almost acknowledged idiot."

"His estates in Moravia do not the less form a petty sovereignty; and his father, as the second noble in Hungary, was one of the three commissioners appointed to receive the Regalia from the representative of the Emperor Joseph."

Iölina raised her shoulder with a gesture of compassion.

"Yet I refrained from one pleading word in his favour! I will not however promise the same self-denial with regard to Lingotski; for I own that his frank temper and spirited demeanour have warmly interested me in his destiny. His *brusquerie*, which is a mere evidence of his single-hearted sincerity,—his lavish disinterestedness,—his proud nationality,—do but heighten the influence of his fine countenance and commanding figure. No! Iölina—ask me not to be indifferent to your opinion of the noble Sigmond Lingotski."

"If it be your pleasure, Madam, to know it, let me frankly acknowledge it to be of a most

flattering character. Were it not for an occasional glance of ferocity in those dark eyes, and a slight betrayal of self-value, and haughty recklessness, I feel that I could as willingly adopt Count Lingotski for a brother, as I should delight to name Sidonia, my most beloved sister."

"A mere phrase,—and one too that deceives no one, Iölina. Either you love him, or you love him not," said the Baroness, provoked beyond her line of policy.

"Then most unequivocally, I do *not*, dear aunt. Perhaps the indolent lassitude of our Southern lordlings, perhaps the wavering cautiousness of one who has been very dear to me, have induced me to consider with undue admiration the Count's bold, ardent frame of mind; but his best qualities are not calculated either to win esteem, or waken love."

"*Love!*" repeated the indignant Baroness. "Love!—a word which at your age had never passed my lips,—can scarcely be awakened with safety or propriety, except under the sanction, and in the seclusion of married life. My trust in Lingotski"—

"For pity's sake, dear madam, do not name him as connected with such a subject; I have no reason to imagine that the Count wishes to influence our theories."

"You cannot affect to be ignorant that he has long retained me as his advocate, and secured your uncle's approval of his suit?—and that such an alliance can be regarded but as an undue honour and distinction vouchsafed to the Zeriny family."

"I misdoubted me of this," murmured Iölina, turning very pale, and resting her head on the two fair arms stretched upon the table before her; and, after a pause of some minutes, uplifting it bathed in tears. "Have you heard aught from the Princess, madam, concerning this wretched project;—does she,—*can* she desire to inflict that injury upon a brother so beloved?"

"I have received, by the courier of to-day, a diffuse declaration of her unqualified approval; a declaration, which her peculiarly delicate position between the parties, alone prevented her from addressing to yourself. "She *must* be my

sister," is Sidonia's expression. "She has long held that place in my affection; and now, let Iölina write herself a Lingotski, let her restore the man who loves her to society and to his better self, or prepare to forfeit all my confidence in her generosity of mind."

"In how many days can I receive the Princess's answer to a letter I would gladly address to her?" inquired Iölina with a look of vague terror.

"By *estafette*, in six."

"The courier of the day, madam, will suffice my wishes, if you will undertake to avert, during the interim, all explanation with the Count."

Baroness Zeriny readily engaged herself to fulfil the wishes of her niece in both instances; and no time was lost in expediting the following letter.

## CHAPTER IX.

E questa l'ora, è questa
Che a te non lice più ingannar te stessa
Nè altrui.

ALFIERI.

"Thou hast threatened, Sidonia, to dismiss me from thy friendship, if I consent not to become thy brother's wife. Is this generous?—is it true to him, to me, to thyself? If any can be aware how early my affections were bestowed upon my cousin Cassian, it is thou; if any can estimate how fondly, how wholly, they were granted,—how painfully resumed, it is only thou, Sidonia. Yet thou wouldst have me grant unto a brother whom thou cherishest, a heart thus worn and wounded by sorrow,—thus bitterly rejected;—thou wouldst have me lay bare that suffering

bosom which hath long been shrinking from a world in which it trusted its breathing might prove brief! Thou wouldst have me surrender to his scrutiny a mind haunted by remembrances of another,—stung into misanthropy by a sense of humiliation,—and deprived of those fervid hopes, —of that trust in human excellence,—so requisite to cheer and irradiate the path of wedded life.

"I cannot do this! I cannot so abuse a noble nature; or recompense a disinterested attachment by such unworthy duplicity. My heart knows not to retain one shadow of falsehood and be at peace;—like the glass of Venice, it would break rather than retain the 'leprous distilment.'

"Yet believe me not ungrateful, dearest Sidonia, for the generous preference with which I am distinguished by the Count; nor insensible to the happiness of being akin to those of his blood, or the honour of bearing a name so lofty in the records of the land. I do not ungraciously estimate, nor would rashly reject a connexion

which, in gifting me with a home and a protector would seal the happiness of many who are dear to me. I have been slow to believe in the existence of Lingotski's attachment; but since I can no longer doubt that it is his intention to seek me in marriage, I will not by a mis-timed delicacy delay an explanation which will probably influence his views; and it is to my best and kindest friend I turn for aid and counsel in my difficulties. Resolved as I am that perfect candour shall be between us, yet can I not gather courage to speak to him of Cassian; or to betray with my own lips the weakness of my own heart; and it is from thyself only that Lingotski must learn that I have been already loved, and have loved in return;—that my lip hath already breathed words of tenderness to other ears;—nay more,—hath received the fond impress of mutual affection,—that impress which once bestowed should be for ever holy!

"I see thee start Sidonia;—I see thee revile me with an outrage of maidenly reserve. But is not this better than an artful concealment between

two persons who are about to swear eternal truth and mutual confidence? *About to swear*, did I say? No! dearest Princess;—I feel that Sigmond will recoil from planting his foot in the desart I have opened to his gaze,—will shun to place the withered branch within his bosom whose flowers have been already gathered; and though I trust he hath sufficient confidence in the mercy of Heaven to believe that there is no growth of human passion that may defy the control of human will, and sufficient faith in Iölina's truth to know that no consideration would induce her to pronounce her marriage vow with a divided heart,—yet I feel that I am henceforward secure from his addresses. But I shall equally escape the reproaches of my own heart, and the distrust of my best Sidonia; and in this precious persuasion, I implore her to be promptly and perfectly candid in her explanations, and to do justice, without delay, to a brother whom she loves.

IÖLINA ZERINY.'

This epistle once dispatched, its gentle writer assumed her ordinary tone of composure. Count Lingotski was indeed somewhat startled on perceiving that her former trepidation whenever he approached had subsided into a confiding calmness; but notwithstanding the various emotions which her altered manner of receiving his attentions roused within his heart, he suffered himself to be dissuaded by the plausible Baroness from seeking an explanation. Another week was permitted to elapse in green-wood feastings,—in moonlight excursions upon the Danube,—in archery and serenades, and the representations of *tableaux* and ballads, and all those idle recreations which the impassioned fancy of a lover can suggest; and still, the wishes and the hopes which dwelt in his heart, were not permitted to pass his lips; and in the bright pictures he delighted to draw in her hearing of his Transylvanian palace and future home, the image of Iölina was never *expressly* included.

At length an affectionate but inexplicit answer arrived from Princess Betthyani, inclosing a

mysterious packet for her brother; and whatever its contents might have been, they certainly gave rise to no very perplexing considerations; for on the very same evening, Lingotski sought the trembling girl as she sat beneath the quivering shade of a group of beech trees that adorned the garden of the house, and frankly,—perhaps abruptly,—demanded the long coveted gift of her hand and heart.

"I am not skilled in German courtesies," said the young Count, in a tone of the deepest feeling. "The sovran throne, at whose feet I have been nurtured, stands in the depths of the green-wood; and my lessons of chivalry have been conned amid the wild Walachian camps. Such as I am,—a plain, rude man,—but honest and true and devoted, take me,—or tell me that my destinies are less happily appointed. Tell me that my rough nature may not be soothed by thy sweet companionship, Iölina; that thy grace will not stoop to temper my savage existence,—and I will away again to the wastes of my solitude, and seek consolation in their loneliness."

He spoke firmly; but the tears glittered in his full proud eyes at the very sounds he had nerved himself to utter. There is perhaps no homage so precious to a woman as the unwonted emotion of a stern mind,—the subjection of a manly character; such a tribute is at once flattering and touching.

"I had trusted," said Iölina faintly, "that Sidonia's letter would have given a new impulse to your intentions."

"Not a whit,—not by the weight of a grain of sand. Rather hath it confirmed them a thousand-fold."

"And can you,—conscious that I confess myself unable at present to return your predilection,—can you be content with the gift of my sisterly regard;—can you wish me to become your wife?"

"Now blessings on thee for a word I have not yet dared to utter;—blessings on thee for thine explicit candour. I do—I do"—exclaimed Sigmond with vehemence, "Little know they, or lightly prize, the sweetest attributes of woman-

hood, who would wish to find love matured in a maidenly bosom. Be it my enchanting task to plant it there, dearest Iölina, in the confiding happiness of our future life; and oh! how pure, how bright will be its dawning in the sweet summer of our wedded happiness;—with what entire and grateful devotion will it be hailed by him whose whole existence will be insufficient to repay the blessing. Yes! Iölina," continued he folding her hand within his own, "when its first sweet ray breaks upon Sigmond, thou wilt find him a very Persian in his worship."

Iölina Zeriny shrinking from his touch, uttered a sigh of deep despair. She paused to collect breath and courage, for she felt that both were deserting her; but the indecision of manner arising from the use of a foreign idiom,—for Lingotski, contrary to the usage of his *caste*, affected the Hungarian dialect,—imparted to her address a character of emotion rather than of suffering.

"I cannot—cannot believe it,"—said she, as if thinking aloud. "It is impossible that I

should have so mistaken his character, or that so proud a heart should seek me under circumstances so painfully humiliating."

"Do not thus undervalue thy sweet self," whispered the Count, mistaking her meaning. "Thinkest thou that any brow as fair blushes under the weight of an Austrian coronet;—that any heart as pure beats amid the dishonoured corruption of Vienna? Can even thine own bright Italy shew a step more full of grace,—an air more delicately feminine? No!" continued he, bending humbly before her, and speaking with more intense fervour, "thou canst not affect to doubt the beauty of thy cheek,—the high intelligence of thy spirit,—the pure unworldliness of thy heart;—and what more can man require in her whom he would fold in wedded faith to a confiding bosom,—what more can Lingotski ask in one whose excellence were ill-exchanged for the unseemly warmth of passion?"

Iölina attempted no reply to such flattering protestations; but she turned involuntarily from

the inquiring glances she found fixed upon her face.

"Didst thou but know," continued her lover, "how different my destiny hath seemed since I learned from thy looks my first sweet lesson of love! My dark, unendeared existence appears wholly altered,—the very earth I tread is less firm beneath my feet,—the air I breathe more buoyant. I have sometimes gone from thy presence, Iölina, indignant and incensed against the empire which so arbitrarily sways my being;—I have gone from thee fiercely resolute to burst the bonds by which thou hast enslaved me,—careless whither I wandered,—fevered, restless, and impatient. But in the midst of my roaming, some thought,—some image recalling thy loveliness,—hath stolen like the soothing of distant music upon my mind, and subdued its irritation into still softer tenderness. I have learned to blend that image with my future hopes;—I have learned to trust that my deep devotion may hereafter win thee from thine indifference;—may charm from its sphere the fair star I worship;—

and perhaps at some distant—very far distant period, waken in Iölina's heart a faint reflection of the feelings which burn in mine. Am I too bold,—am I too sanguine? or may I,—turn not away from me, Iölina,—may I presume to await so precious a change?"

The beating pulses in Iölina Zeriny's quivering lips rendered her reply at first inaudible. She was far from insensible to the earnestness of the feelings lavished upon her,—and cheered and elevated in her own esteem, she was desirous of imparting a hope that her sentiments might at some future time acquire a warmer character, without deceiving the Count into a belief of being loved, or possessed of her sole confidence.

"If thou wilt accept such concessions as I can offer," said she; "if thou canst content thyself with such expectations as may arise from thy trust in my truth and self-government, take them, Lingotski;—but thank me not for so poor a gift. I would willingly offer a better exchange for thine affection—thy generous professions."

The Count expressed himself grateful for a consent even thus tempered with ungracious conditions. From that moment, their engagement was openly acknowledged.

## CHAPTER X.

Et qu' est-ce que ce réveil ? C'est le désenchantment de la vie ?
DE STAEL.

FROM the time that a solemn pledge of betrothment was exchanged between Count Lingotski and her niece, the Baroness, although exulting in the success of her schemes, ventured not to neglect a single occasion of perfecting her views; nor suffered her vigilant watchfulness over her victims one moment to relax. The demon of restlessness appeared to possess her; for she hurried them from diversion to diversion, from place to place, from annoyance to annoyance; lest one hour of confidential communication should lead to a better understanding between them, during the progress of the ordinary contracts and preparations for their union. It had been resolved

among the parties that, as the peculiar and most delicate political position of the Count forbade him to court publicity, and that as the lowly condition of his affianced bride demanded little of the pomp and circumstance of glorious wedlock, their marriage should be celebrated at Lingotski's *château* on the Platen See; whither Princess Betthyani might adjoin for the ceremony, and whence the Baroness might accompany her on her return to Pesth. This arrangement, the informality of which elicited many shrugs from the Countesses Maddalena and Dorottya, afforded some relief to Iölina's dread of observation, as well as to Lingotski's anxiety to avoid the formalities and irritations of the capital; and both were well content to acquiesce in the wishes of Baroness Zeriny that her three Mehádian inseparables should accompany them in their journey, and assist at the ensuing ceremony. Ere a fortnight had elapsed from the receipt of Sidonia's letter, the whole party was settled in the castle of Lingotski, situated amid the choicest scenery of the lake of Balaton.

However engrossed in personal considerations and harassed by hurry and anxiety, Iölina Zeriny could not be wholly insensible to the magnificence of her future home, or to the deference with which the Count had established the order of her welcome. With delicate tact, he had avoided all appearance of particularizing her from the rest of the little society; but her tastes had been affectionately consulted, and served with a silent ministry. The flowers she loved, the books she preferred, the musical instruments in whose touch she excelled, had been procured through Sidonia's agency, to adorn her apartment; the yacht which bore them over the calm waters of the lake, displayed her colours; the villagers of Lingotski in strewing their path towards the vessel with flowers, scattered roses and everlastings only before Iölina's steps;—but still, the Count presumed not to offer his support to those feeble footsteps, nor to seat himself by her side when the rude gusts descended from the hills to fill their canvas, or rock their frail bark. He was unwilling to intimidate by offi-

cious attentions, the regard and interest which he trusted to win by a patient forbearance.

The castle was seated in bold prominence upon a rocky shore, where the scenery of the lake might claim exemption from its general character of insipidity, and where the mischiefs arising from the marshy lands in its vicinity were wholly unfelt. The mansion, although vast and of modern erection, appeared comfortless, and lacking the distribution of female elegance;—its principal charm indeed arose from the view commanded by its lofty windows along the glassy expanse of blue waters,—whose calm outline was broken only by the mountain island, of rock and coppice, which like that of Lochleven, so strangely lifts itself above the smooth bosom of the lake;—while the wild shriek of the water-fowl, or the bell-like cry of the frogs chiming among the bulrushes alone disturbed its lone and dignified stillness. The Baroness, full of importance, occupied herself in affecting to lead the rambles of the party among the glorious avenues traversing the oak forests by which the territories of the

Count were enriched; or in detaining their loitering footsteps among the splendid orangeries from whose open doors espaliers bright with golden fruit, extended their gorgeous alleys through the trim gardens.

She planned excursions to the beautiful peninsular of Tihány; she sufficiently overpowered the terrors of the Erdödy virgins to allure them upon the lake in one of the canoes so ominously named *seel-trinkers* or soul-swallowers,—and that too at the dark hour of midnight,—in order to watch the magical effect of the bonfires kindled upon its shores as snares for the cray-fish.

One morning she insisted upon devoting to an inspection of the family portraits adorning the galleries and banquetting chamber,—an inspection which she knew would gratify the pride and engross all the attention of the Count, whom she forced to become their *cicerone*. Another, she contrived to occupy in a visit to the snail and tortoise-ground; where Lingotski found himself compelled to gratify the frivolous inquisitiveness of the Bishop concerning the breeding and

feeding and management of the reptiles so essential to the enjoyment of a German epicure; while Iölina was enabled to escape from their tedious dulness,—to wander through the deserted gardens,—and to ask of her own distrusting heart whether it might ever enable her to interest herself in such details, and to assume, with becoming pride, the high station to which she was summoned by the devoted tenderness of Lingotski.

Notwithstanding all that has been said and sung in honour of the retentive memory of Love, and the pæans which have been hymned in celebration of his constancy, I am little inclined to believe in the inexorcizeable properties of "*l'ami secret*;" against which Lethe and the Red Sea are supposed to be equally profitless.—

En songeant qu'il faut qu'on l'oublie,
On s'en souvient!

says the song. But what says experience, what says truth in such an exigency? That to the wise and resolute the act of forgetfulness is one of mere volition;—that Love, uncherished and unsupported by the sweet food of Hope,

dies of famine; and that those images which, in good faith, we strive to banish from our hearts, will soon relinquish their importunate hold upon our imagination. Were our minds less mercifully framed for fickleness and levity, many a fate would close in darkness which a wiser dispensation recalls into the sunshine of newer hopes; for few are the human beings who, in the course of their earthly existence, are not compelled by duty or wisdom, or circumstances, to renounce some cherished connexion, some warmly-prized attachment.—Love, if immortal, would be the worst of fiends.

From the moment that the gentle Iölina resigned her faith and her destiny into the hands of Lingotski, she flung from her sight all records of her early attachment, and diligently refrained from even a transient indulgence in recollections of the past; and by the time her bridal preparations were completed, and the Princess, joyous, and exulting, and affectionate, arrived to gladden the marriage solemnities by her presence, the timid Iölina had succeeded in dismissing from

her heart every feeling calculated to retard the awakening influence of her future lord; and when Sidonia started at the sight of her pale cheeks, and agitated countenance, she attributed her emotion to a cause which had *almost* ceased to exist,—and *wholly* ceased to exert an undue empire over her mind. The Princess noted with anxious regret that her young friend still appeared lost in contemplation and reverie; and little imagined that her solitary reflections partook of a character far more flattering to her future husband, than to her former lover.

Iölina had in truth few remembrances to cherish which were favourable to her early attachment. She could not but be sensible that her rights had been undervalued by the Zeriny family; and the consciousness of injury served to enhance the value of Sigmond Lingotski's disinterested preference;—a preference which elevated both him and herself in her own esteem. She had learned to look upon the gift of affection as one of no mean value; and the prospect of finding her future happiness dependent upon him who seemed

to hold it so precious, instead of upon those churlish, calculating hearts, which had hitherto formed her sole reliance, cheered and consoled her mind, and inspired it with many grateful thoughts.

"I fear me," thought Lölina, "that my versatility of feeling affords a powerful evidence of the desolation of my existence; and that the thankful regard I am learning to entertain for Lingotski, forms a bitter accusation against those who should have stood by my helplessness with better courage. But no matter! Let me but learn to love him, and I care not through what rude channel the feeling may flow; let me but acquire the influence to subdue his untamed spirit into the gentle charities of life, and my days will brighten, and my heart forget its afflictions under the mastery of holier feelings."

If the falsehood of her position and the seeming hollowness of her professions struck her with consciousness or alarm, it was when Sidonia pressed her to her heart in the fondness of sisterly affection, and with the vehemence of her own

misgoverned feelings. But the emotion was momentary; for the *accueil* of the Princess possessed a cordiality so peculiar and so graceful, that all the restraint of concealment, and all the perplexity of doubt, appeared to vanish in her presence. Possessed of the entire confidence of each member of the little group assembled in the castle, she knew how to determine every uncertainty, and to assign to the conduct of each, such motives as were most flattering and honourable. The dulness which had overpowered the circle, disappeared before her animated address and cheerful self-reliance; while,—glancing lightly over their difficulties,—resolving their doubts,—and warmly seconding their expectations of future happiness,—she appeared among them like a second Providence. After a single day in Sidonia's society, the Baroness began to marvel how she could have reproached herself with having dealt harshly with her orphan niece;—the Countesses Erdödy learned to renounce their bigotheresies concerning *mésalliances* in general, and the Lord of Lingotski's in particular;—Sig-

mond himself abjured his last lingering doubt of the tenderness of his bride;—and the bride, agitated and perplexed, taught herself to believe the assurances of the Princess that her love for Cassian had been imaginary, and that her attachment for Lingotski would form the best blessing of her existence.

The attention of the minor puppets of the drama was fixed upon the paraphernalia of bridal finery which the lavish hand and exquisite taste of Sidonia had prepared for the occasion; and upon the matchless jewels which had been withdrawn from the treasury of the Count at Szent Miklós, to contrast their ponderous magnificence of former fashion with the lighter elegance of those which had been contributed from the most fashionable *Niederlagen* of Vienna.

The increasing indisposition of Prince Bethyani limited the absence of Sidonia; and before Iölina had found time to relax from the excitement afforded by the arrival of her beloved friend, the solemn contract was signed, the solemn rite pronounced by the august Bishop of Erlau, and

the Baroness was enabled to swell the measure of her pride by saluting her niece as—Countess of Lingotski!

Scarcely was the momentous ceremony at an end, when Sidonia placed in the hands of her new sister a letter of grace addressed in the most flattering terms by the Emperor to his unruly subject, the Magnat Lingotski.

"It is your own wedding gift unto Sigmond, dearest Ina," whispered the Princess, weeping for very joy. "Give it to him, dearest; and reward me by making it your bridal request to pass the coming winter at Vienna; for the condition of my excellent husband has compelled him to resign his public appointments, and to settle himself in Austria, under more skilful care."

At this announcement and request, a cloud began to overshadow the countenance of the bridegroom, who was but half occupied in the perusal of the important document presented to him by Tolma; and the young Countess, attributing his evident distaste to the proposal, to a

disinclination to sanction a renewed intimacy with Cassian, who was now known to be settled at Vienna, gently, but firmly rejected the proposal.

"No! dearest Sidonia; do not ask it," said she. "Remember how often Lingotski has pledged me his word that we shall pass our winter at Szent Miklós; remember how often you have yourself striven to excite my interest respecting his Transylvanian possessions. No! mere woman as I am, you cannot expect me to exchange the dignity I should there enjoy for the subordinate honours of mere sufferance at the Imperial Court."

If Sidonia's joy seemed damped by this explicit declaration, which excited the undisguised amazement of the Baroness and the Erdödy spinsters, the air of affectionate gratitude with which Sigmond advanced to kiss the hand of his bride, in acknowledgment for her deference to his unexpressed wishes, proved a sufficient reward to the young Countess. This circumstance was indeed alone wanting to complete Lingotski's

triumph. His lovely wife had marked her preference of his society to all worldly distinctions; —was content to dwell with him in the rude desarts of Transylvania, instead of sunning her beauties in the prosperity of court favour;—and had thus publicly set forth the disinterestedness of her views in accepting his hand.

Once more, and but once, did Sidonia renew her importunities. As she was on the point of departure, she loitered in the chamber of her new sister to entreat her to take pity upon her loneliness as an attendant on the sick bed of the Prince,—and to join her at Vienna.

"You cannot surely desire me to require this sacrifice of the Count," answered the bride, distressed by her perseverance. "Nobly as Lingotski hath been pleased to overlook the past, I cannot consent to court his disapproval by appearing however innocently, to seek the society of Cassian."—

"Hush!" exclaimed the Princess, closing the lips of her sister with her tiny hand. "Be that name unbreathed for ever by Iölina Lingotski;

and let me venture to forewarn her that the sole blemish in the character of my brother, is a restless and tenacious spirit of jealousy which, once roused into action, would mar the happiness of his own life, and that of all those to whom it is important."

"Nay!" replied the young Countess, folding her veil around her in the absence of a preoccupied mind, "*that*, love, is a menace uttered in jest. After his indifference to the explicit declaration of my previous attachment conveyed through your hands, I can have little to fear from his jealousy."

The Princess appeared perplexed and in a painful state of indecision; at length approaching her lovely sister, and impressing a farewell kiss upon her pale forehead, she whispered, "I would that no feeling of self-reproach mingled its bitterness with my present joy,—a joy and a triumph which I sacrificed my own candour and peace of mind to secure. Satisfied, dearest Iölina, from my knowledge of the temperance of Sigmond's character, that he would little

endure to seek his happiness in the possession of a divided heart, I could not find courage for a disclosure which I *knew* would prove the signal of alienation. Too late, I have repented of my error in concealing from his knowledge every circumstance relating to Cassian Zerinyi;—too late, I perceive that discovery would now prove fatal to his happiness and yours. Forgive, if you can, a crime arising from the intensity of my desire to see you the wife of my brother, and aid me in retaining his good opinion by future silence on the topic."

Princess Betthyani fondly pressed the cold hands she held, to her lips and heart; and disappeared, before the marble figure to which she had uttered this fatal adieu had recovered sense and motion. The sound of a long train of carriages driving from the court-yard recalled her to recollection. Her lips were firmly compressed, her burning eye-balls tearless. She knew herself to be alone with him who had been betrayed into making her his wife;—she knew herself to be about to encounter that noble brow, the terrors of

whose furious indignation might at any moment of enlightenment, burst upon herself. She had abused,—unwillingly but irrevocably,—his generous nature;—she felt that the hour for confidence had passed away;—and with it, her hope of being happy and of conferring happiness upon him to whom she had sworn entire fealty and love. Is it wonderful that she received him with a cold shudder of dread and agony, when he returned, in the full confidingness of affection, to fold her to his heart?

## CHAPTER XI.

My foot is on my native heath,—and my name is M'Gregor!
Rob Roy.

Nearly as soon as the Baroness had fixed herself for the winter in her hotel at Pesth, did the young Countess Lingotski find herself installed in her gorgeous palace of Szent Miklós, in the county of Arader; enjoying a degree of regal pomp which proved a most wearisome obstacle to her pleasures, but finding in the consciousness of having forestalled in the selection of her abode, the wishes of a husband by whom she was wholly beloved, a far more profitable source of gratification.

If the Lingotskische Schloss on the Platen See had surprised her by its air of grandeur, the rude

desolate splendours of Szent Miklós oppressed her with a sense of loneliness painful to her feelings. The palace, although of stupendous dimensions, and befitting the princely estate of which it formed the central point, did not strike her by any unusual shew of dignity when viewed from the glorious avenue by which it was approached for many leagues. But as the distance gave way, and the whole edifice with its turrets and bartizans and overhanging galleries burst upon her sight, with the Lingotski body-guard of Hussars drawn up in splendid array upon the glacis, and a countless multitude of vassals lining the road, and apparently marshalled by military discipline to salute the arrival of their lord, she turned towards Lingotski half afraid to express her sentiments of wonder and admiration, and perceived that he had resumed the national uniform, and that an expression of fierce triumph and exultation was glancing in his eyes, such as she had never before detected among their varying characters.

"Ay!" said he, half communing with himself, half addressing his observations to his attentive

bride, "well may the Emperor begrudge me these evidences of hereditary rule; well may he envy me these powerful ministers of my will, whose rude energies put shame upon the nerveless puppets that line the drowsy palace-courts of Vienna. Let him chaffer and haggle inch by inch over his crown lands; let dolts and slaves, like the Zerinys, expect to win with the plains of the *Banat* the allegiance of the curs who dig thereon for bread; but hereditary right can alone insure hereditary might,—and a world of ducats would never replace at Szent Miklós the talismanic power of Lingotski's name. 'The king may make a belted knight,' but who can create a magnat of Hungary?"

As he spoke, they crossed the drawbridge; and the broidered banners of his regiment were lowered as the carriage entered the court-yard, and drew up under the stone arcades of the hall of entrance, the groined roof of which rested upon massive columns of red granite. The household, headed by the *hofrichter* of the estate, accompanied by the chief engineer of the

mines, and by two resident professors of medicine and natural history, was assembled to greet with humble deference the first appearance of the Count; and Lingotski led the timid steps of his bride through long files of vassals and dependents into the great saloon which, despite the mirrors, and statues, and tapestries with which it was adorned, looked like the awful and uninhabitable vestibule of an enchanted castle. Iölina half shuddered as she turned into the deep embrasure of a window to gaze upon the boundless prospect that lay beneath. She perceived that avenues similar to that by which they had reached the palace, served as approaches to the three opposite entrances of its quadrangle; and the mighty cross of foliage formed by their junction afforded the only shew of verdure visible for many miles.

A rich bank of forest seemed however to rise in the distant horizon, towards a chain of hills forming a principal pass into Transylvania, and known as the "Brazen Door;" and a slope, covered with vineyards, appeared to terminate the chain still nearer to Szent Miklós:—but neither copse nor

bushy dingle, nor isolated groups of massive elm or oak varied the monotonous but fertile plains on a knoll of which the Palace was situated, and which lay around it in vast and almost uninhabitable dreariness. There were pastures, it is true, alive with cattle, "forty feeding like one;"—there were enclosures of mighty extent, from whose stubbly surface the shocks of corn had been but recently removed;—and some still wider, to which the decaying stalks of the *tengeri buza** or maize, imparted a most dreary aspect. But excepting unto those who drew their revenues from the mighty fertility of the land,—those who saw the sun rise upon its vastness, and knew themselves "lords of the fowl and the brute" sheltering in its deep ravines or darkening its spreading lakes, the uninformed expanse conveyed no pleasurable sensations. It wanted the vivifying impulse of a free and prospering population; it wanted a shew of happy human growth to strengthen its appeal to the heart; for although

* Literally, *sea wheat*.

the labourers who were seen scattered on the plains, some busy in tillage,—some in guarding the flocks,—some spear in hand, driving herds of woolly Turkish swine towards the forest, or bringing homewards from its dark recesses, droves of milch-buffaloes,—although they bore no manacles on their limbs, nor were overlooked by a scourge-bearing overseer,—yet the impress of bondage and degradation was as plainly marked upon their swart foreheads, as if the scene of their labours had been encircled by Caribbean seas; and thus the landscape borrowed no enlivenment from its living features. Saving the eagles which were winging their lofty way towards the distant mountains, or a solitary bustard following their flight at a timid interval, there was not a single free or happy thing visible between the parched earth and the clear blue sky by which it was overhung!

During the early days of her sojourn at Szent Miklós, the Countess,—overcome by the fatigues of her journey, and harassed by the vehemence with which her lord was disposed to resent the

deficiency of her accustomed luxuries, with which the chief purveyors of the capital had been charged to anticipate her arrival,—had little leisure for extending her observations. It was in vain she attempted to represent the difficulty of conveyance to so remote and inaccessible a spot; the limited time, the scanty preparation afforded to the delinquents. Her arguments were insufficient to moderate the wrath of Lingotski who had been earnestly desirous that the first dreary *coup d' œil* of his comfortless palace should neither intimidate nor disgust the fair creature whose life he would have gladly rendered brilliant and joyous as the pageant of a fairy dream.

"Blame me not, sweet Ina," cried he, "nor deem me a trifler that my mind is vexed by circumstances so puerile. At Szent Miklós, I am accustomed to know myself absolute. Between my power and that of the King of kings, interveneth but a solitary sceptre; and even against the will of yonder Emperor, yonder *fainéant* representative of a line inferior to my own,—even against an Imperial decree,—the swords of my

vassals would probably bear me scatheless. Yet tremble not, love! I am not about to dare the contest. I have made my strength known already, and that alone hath secured me the favour which Sidonia hath been pleased to ascribe to the intercession of her doting husband, the puppet of the Aulic Chamber. Yes; at Szent Miklós the breath of my lips forms an unimpeachable law; and I confess myself guilty of having gloried, from my youth upwards, in such a consciousness. But I never tasted the sweets of power,—I never truly indulged in the exultation of gratified pride, till I was enabled to lay its trophies at the feet of the woman I loved, and to delegate to her hand the mastery of my every earthly possession."

"Would you could learn how lightly she hath taught herself to hold all human distinctions."

"I *would not* learn it, Iölina; for are they not the sole gifts in which I can boast a pre-eminence over herself; or which have yielded me the power of marking towards her the deference of affection? Even now, dearest, 'tis for your sake alone I prize that which will aid me in the gratification

of your sweet wishes,—of every caprice of your fancy. Say, am I not happy?—am I not fortunate beyond the common lot of mortals? God had gifted me by birthright with wealth and station, and with capacity to render them available; yet scarcely had dawning manhood aroused my intemperate restlessness, and taught me to consider such distinctions insufficient for happiness, when a being as gentle, as fair, as highly-gifted as the wildest visions of my solitude had suggested, consents to share the proud obscurity, the dignified seclusion which, without her presence, had not sufficed for enjoyment; but which when blest with her society, form a paradise brighter than the Eden of Eastern climes! Pardon my self-gratulation, Iölina; forgive my egotism, when you remember that it hath been the daydream of my life to possess myself of a pure and unsullied heart;—a heart whose pulse had never quickened under the gaze of another,—whose tide had never warmed till my voice wakened it into life and love;—and bethink thee that, despite the rarity of such a blessing, I have made it my own!"

By such allusions,—by such untimely exultation, did Lingotski mar the enjoyment of many an hour which had otherwise passed away in the peaceful interchange of affection; and check and discourage that dawning confidence which time and patience might have ripened into a feeling precious as that of which he had been beguiled, and which he still believed himself to possess within the bosom of his bride. "In such a wilderness as this,

Where transport and security entwine,

love might have revelled in a bower of bliss as sweet as any that hath blossomed since the days of earth's simple childhood; and even with the self-conviction that prayed upon her mind, and even with the apprehensions of discovery that embittered her happiest hours, the young Countess was prompt to acknowledge to herself that her days had never passed so quickly away; and that the devotion of the heart we are permitted to call our own, is at once the most holy and the sweetest of earthly blessings.

Her whole character was indeed changed and

tempered by the vicissitudes through which, young as she was, she had been destined to pass; and the mutability of her fortunes had subdued her mind into that deep and humble sense of the transitory nature of human happiness and the uncertainty of life, which is perhaps the best safeguard of present enjoyment. In her season of early prosperity she had shone as a lovely and intelligent, as well as a good and gracious creature; in her succeeding season of adversity she had exhibited a mild forbearance;—and in the trials and torments by which she had been perplexed during that season's troubled course, she had retained her graceful dignity of character, even when most humiliated,—most desolately lonely. And now that a new source of bitterness and undeserved affliction was opened to her taste, she felt that her lessons of sorrow had not been learned in vain. She dashed not the chalice from her lips in peevish despair; she refrained not from the draught in wayward discontent; but patiently and firmly nerved herself to meet and avert the dangers by which she was menaced.

Gentle, humble, grave, and self-reproving, she resolved to bear much at the hands of one she had involuntarily deceived and injured,—to labour unrelaxingly in her task of softening the asperity of his character and extending her influence over his affections; and perhaps the doubts she entertained of her own rights upon his tenderness, and her own power of averting the dangers of discovery, tended more than aught beside to enhance the value of that tenderness in her eyes, and to fix her entire interest and attention upon the means of securing their mutual love and happiness.

Sentiments such as these,—so purely, so delicately feminine,—although they united to sadden her joyous smile, and to add a yet more reserved grace to her endearing gentleness, did but serve to render her more lovely, and more precious to him unto whom her cares and her humble sweetness were directed; and in proportion as the Countess appeared to study the will and caprices of her lord, did Lingotski resign the empire of that will into her hands. He, who knew so well to value the possession of absolute power, be-

stowed in lavish affection upon his wife the sole governance of his wayward mind, as the highest tribute in his power to offer. "I feel that I have become the veriest slave of love!" he would say; "but I feel it only to wish I could prove myself still *more* devoted,—still *more* fondly attached. I fear not that so pure a passion should render my mind enervate or unmanly; and therefore I glory in my subjection. My happiness, my pride, my honour, are centred in Iölina's heart;—can I fear that they will suffer blight or pain in such sweet keeping?"

But even protestations like these, and the devoted tenderness by which they were verified, less powerfully marked to the Countess her influence over the stern wild character of her husband, than the diligence with which her intercession and mediation were sought by all those dependent upon his will. The wretched prisoners whose clanking fetters were heard under the keep of the castle,—converted by the right of its lord to the *Jus Gladii*, into the county gaol,—trusted to the tender mercies of Lingotski's bride

for the re-admission of light and air into their fœtid dungeon; — the *heiducks*, whose trivial sins of omission in the execution of their various duties had been wont to be reproved, in the Hungarian fashion, with sabre blows, now obtained a remission of punishment by braving it under those gentle eyes which brooked not to look upon severity;—even the luckless *Hofrichter* who had been dismissed from his appointment for the negligence with which he had slighted the accommodation of the Countess on her first arrival, obtained forgiveness and re-instalment at her entreaty.

"Forgive him, love," said she, "for my sake; and believe, henceforward, that I am utterly indifferent whether my cushions of state be of serge or brocade; or whether my lamp burn in a golden vase or earthen vessel. These tapestries, though faded, served the need of the mighty ancestors in whose names you glory; and the daughters of kings have lent their honours to your line, nor asked a richer canopy than that which now overhangs the head of the merchant's lowly child."

She checked herself, for she saw the red blood rush to the very temples of the Count; and recognized too late that, although he had been stimulated by an impulse of passion to overlook the degradation of her birth, he had still no mind to hear it blazoned in other ears by her humble frankness of speech. "Yet pardon me, Lingotski," continued Iölina, following his retreating steps into an interior and still more comfortless chamber, "pardon me that I cannot share thy loftiness of thought and sternness of will;—if they are virtues in thy sight, be it mine to labour in their acquirement. Methought that in thy bold defence of the rights of the people against the Austrian yoke,—methought that in wedding with one of a degree so lowly, thou hadst marked thy contempt for wordly distinctions. Methought," added she, clinging to his arm and lifting her pleading eyes to his, "that he who could stoop to ally himself with one contemned even by those whose name she bore, had shewn himself superior to petty cares for pomp and state."

"The eagle," replied Sigmond, parting the hair upon the fair forehead on which he gazed, and speaking proudly, but with intense feeling, "the eagle, dearest, may bear off the dove of the plains unto its lone eyrie, nor fear reproach from the baser fowls of the earth. He heeds not, in his sun-lit flight, the gibbering of their vulgar comment;—he fears not in his lofty home, participation in their vileness. But 'tis not so with birds of a meaner wing. Each must maintain above each, his attributes of petty superiority; and yonder Baroness,—unto whom I conceive thee to allude,—with her minor nobility and doubtful pretensions, would be dragged back into the dust, by the smallest impediment upon her flight."

"Pray Heaven," murmured the bride, startled by the arrogance of the simile, "pray Heaven the dove find not so lofty a nest too lone, too high for happiness!"

But a being so gentle, so full of the sweetest human charities, could not long be lonely. Lingotski, it is true, was soon and frequently

removed from her side by the busy cares of his little kingdom; by the appeals of the various *Rentmeisters* resident on the more remote districts of his lands,—by those of the engineers appointed to the management of his canals and marshes,—by the directors of his vast studs and the *Pusztas* to which they were annexed,—and lastly, and more than all important, by the sittings of the local tribunals, or *Herrenstuhls* at which he was prompt to assist;—and Iölina ceased to wonder at the intense interest with which her husband regarded a residence comprehending duties so various, so important to the happiness of his vassals, and to the well-being of his native country.

In the mean time, herself found occasion to profit by the information she was eager to gather from the superior members of her new household; whose literary and scientific acquirements as well as the facilities afforded by their service to the Lingotski, and their long residence in the land, eminently qualified them to instruct her in the character, the habits, and wants of her numerous

dependents. If, on her first arrival, she had been struck by the munificence which had prompted one so unlettered as the Count to append such costly servants to his establishment,—and, still more, by the patient self-denial, or engrossment in abstract pursuits, which enabled two men of superior abilities to endure the seclusion of such a desart, her surprise quickly subsided. She found that amid the savage solitude of Szent Miklós, the power of securing an enlightened companion was one of primary importance; and that the worthy Nadasch, in the musty recesses of the splendid library over which he presided, and Stringer, the simple German naturalist, in the discovery of a mineralogical or botanical variety, and the communication of his triumph to his correspondents at Weimar, Munich, or Geneva, found a deep and peculiar joy, superior to any attainable amid "the hum, the stir, the shock of men."

Both these brothers in philosophy were however equally pleased and proud to be summoned from the folio and the crucible, in order to ex

pound the mysteries of her new kingdom unto the fair creature who seemed, like some angel visitant, new lighted upon their solitude; and who turned from their explanation of her peculiar rights and privileges over her vassals, to inform herself of their miseries and their wants. It is true her first prospect of her unexpected duties was dispiriting in the extreme, and her first insight into the wretched condition of the peasantry, painfully revolting. But with what better occupation might she task her solitude,—or how more satisfactorily beguile her mind from the contemplation of unavailing retrospections, than by ministering to the afflictions of those whom the Almighty had placed at her disposal? Accompanied by Mariska's living legacy, the good but *brusque* and untutored Katalin, her delicate foot shrunk not from the filth of their loathsome cabins;—with her own eyes she learned to know the self-abasement, the brutal ignorance, and evil-will, which are the faithful handmaidens of despotism. No spirit of emulation, no cheering impulse of hope lightened the

heavy tasks of the *Lingotskischen Bauern*—serfs, in all but name! and their huts that lay shadowed from daylight under the castle walls, and their minds which gloomed on in the darkness of subjection to its lord, were equally obscure, cold, and unproductive!

But Iölina, instigated by the more experienced minds of her two elder conductors, bade the light shine upon both; and it was on this point only that she had to encounter the opposition of the Count. She was anxious to secure the assistance of a superior from the Normal School at Hermannstadt, in order to establish one on the same principles at Szent Miklós,—one to be equally open to the children of the native Magyari, to those of the Walachian and other tribes settled upon Lingotski's domains; and even to the miserable offspring of the Tsigánys who, as charcoal burners, were camped by ancient right among his southern forests. The Count, however proud of the activity with which his lovely wife devoted herself to the improvement of the objects around her,—objects so dear to his interests,—opposed

to this new measure not only the doctrines he had learned from the lips of his earliest instructors, the Franciscan Brethren of Pesth, touching the damnatory influence of enlightenment among the labouring classes, but the impossibility of extending the same advantages to the various nations, employing various dialects and languages, upon his lands;—Suabians, speaking only German,—Croats and Sclavonians, the Sclavonic,—Walachians, bringing forward their own corrupt dialect in evidence of their Roman descent*,—and the fierce insolent sons of the Magyari, using alternately a scarcely purer Latin idiom, or their native unpolished tongue.

"They of the vineyards, Ina," said Sigmond, "pour not together into the wine press, the red grape and the amber,—the musky fruit and the acid; nor may we, love, unite the filthy scum of a gypsy camp, and the wild infants of the Walachian tribes; who borrow the usages of Turkey

* "*Noi sentem de sangue Rumena,*" a supposed corruption of "*nos sumus de sanguine Romanis*," is a common Walachian vaunt. The dialect of Walachia is said to contain four-eighths of Latin.

and the heresies of the Patriarch's church, too freely to be admitted into congregation with the Hungarian devotees of the Romish persuasion. Burn your lexicons, and bid Nadasch and Stringer light their *meerschaums* with your task-books;—they will but teach your pupils to despise the ignorance of their fathers, and perhaps, to fall from their creed. But if perforce you must play the Magister, take Szava, my *dorfrichter* for your counsellor, and let the ploughshare prove the hornbook of my vassals;—or better still,—institute with the Serjeant Major of my Lingotskians, an academy of arms, and train me recruits such as may back my cause when next I am subjected to the insolence of one of my cousin Franzl's Imperial decrees. Blood may be spilt between us yet, Inchen;—and it were a worthy task to furnish the need of your rebel husband with capable defence. Tremble not, love; turn not so pale, Iölina, you know not yet the fierce nature you have undertaken to subdue."

Thus diverted from her purpose, though unconvinced by Lingotski's flighty arguments, the

Countess directed the activity of those whose tutelage she had undertaken, to objects more within the scope of her personal interference. She obtained permission to appertion to every hut of the village of Szent Miklós, a garden ground for which the vast inclosures of the palace furnished seeds and plants; and to institute prizes for the annual production of the fairest flowers and fruits; and by this harmless and healthful emulation, she gave employment to the feeble among her people, whether from infancy or caducity.

Thus occupied,—thus interested in ministering to the happiness of others, and thereby securing her own, the long winter passed rapidly over the head of the young Countess Lingotski; nor did she waste one regretful thought upon the crowded halls and theatres of Trieste, which had echoed with praises of her beauty,—or upon the aristocratic and dull dissipation of the Hungarian capital, over which, had she been willing, she might have now proudly presided. To enter into the pursuits of Sigmond, to combat his gigantic

projects,—to share his rides, or traverse with him on foot the snow-covered wastes intervening between the palace of Szent Miklós and its pheasantries,—to cheer his evenings with music, or devote her mornings to the assortment of specimens transmitted by his *Bergwerks Director*,—such were her occupations,—such her diversions; and insufficient as they may appear, Iölina confessed to herself that they rendered that dreary winter the sweetest she had ever passed. Must I acknowledge that her after-life supplied no example of a happier or a brighter season?

## CHAPTER XII.

Earth hath her bubbles,—and these are of them.
SHAKSPEARE.

THERE are few faults so unpardonable or so unpardoned in a writer as that of dulness; and throughout the progress of the story with which I am presuming to weary my readers, I confess I have felt "accountant for as great a sin." I have roused myself,—rallied my drooping mind,—reproved my flagging pen,—but without success. Yet it is no fault inherent in the scene or personages of my tale which hath thus "sicklied it o'er with a pale cast." Without violating the unities of time or place, I might have animated its prosy details by descriptions equally new to the English reader, and inviting to the English writer.

Balaton, — Mehádia, — and the Transylvanian wilds afford a thousand interesting landscapes among which, at another moment, I should have delighted to revel; and I have suppressed the exits and the entrances of a thousand minor actors of the drama, who might have been the cause of wit in others, and have afforded at the same time very original specimens of national character and individual comedy. But whenever I have meditated such an *entrée*, or such details, my spirit hath shrunk rebuked by the impulse of its own levity.

*My story is a true one;* true as far as regards its principal facts and awful catastrophe; and it therefore shuns such adventitious ornaments as grace the more lively imaginings of fiction. I feel that the back-ground of my picture, like that of Titian's *Pietro Martire*, should be dark and lowering; that every period, like the overtures which announce the fable of an *Opera Seria* by Mozart or Paësiello, should be attuned into a solemn cadence; and if the result of such opinions renders my story too cold and too

monotonous for the taste of those unto whom it is addressed, let them lay it aside;—I feel myself incapable of amending my fault.

"And who, dear Ina, is this Baron Zeriny, concerning whom Sidonia writes as of one of the leading gallants of Vienna?" said the Count, as, riding by Iölina's side, he traversed the mighty avenue of Szent Miklós; whose overwoven branches were beginning to swell and bud under the vivifying touch of Spring, and above whose rising heads the restless rooks were circling to and fro, in clamorous activity.

Iölina, who had consented to accompany her lord to the *rendezvous* of a bear hunt at which the few resident nobles scattered through the county purposed assembling, more in the hope of diverting his notice from the incautious minuteness with which Sidonia had alluded to her diversions at Vienna, than from any desire to witness the rude sport of the day, replied with an air as indifferent as she could assume, "'Tis my cousin Cassian. Did you not learn from the epistles of the Baroness that my uncle's patent hath been

confirmed, and that his son is resident in Austria?"

"True,—true;—and this Baron proves then to be the identical philosophizing 'moral young gentleman in black,' who has taken wing from the depths of the *Borsen Halle* in Pesth, into the etherial *coteries* of the *Herren Gasse*; and who, if I rightly remember, was the *bourgeois*—the *kerl*—who, I thank his courtesy, bore evidence against me in the senate, relative to my boyish exploit of leaping my charger from the shore into the ferry-boat; and thereby, as he was pleased to depose, endangering the limbs and lives of his Imperial Majesty's lieges."

"I knew it not," answered the Countess, putting her horse to speed, in order that the tumult of the *cortége* by which they were followed might overpower all further debate on the subject. But the mention of a name which had been so long hushed in her ears,—the discovery of Sigmond's total ignorance respecting Cassian,—and of the enmity existing between them,—rendered her little qualified to meet the noisy greeting of

Count Rudna, the Princes Eglevies, and other devoted followers of the chase whom they found in full synod at the forest rendezvous. Although Lingotski had re-assured her concerning the existence of any danger in their woodland sport, yet her cheek was blanched into a deathly paleness as they approached the spot amid whose blackened stumps and withered grass, a space had been cleared for the hunting tent.

The nature of the roads surrounding Szent Miklós, which were formed of layers of the trunks of trees, interspersed with broken masses of turf, was so little calculated to facilitate social intercourse between its noble inmates and those of the *chateaux* thinly scattered amid the adjoining wilds, that the Countess Lingotski had scarcely before felt occasion to notice the barbarous affectation of nationality pervading their attire, their address and their discourse. Prince Eglevies indeed, who occupied a high command in the Imperial army, had somewhat contracted the more polished habits of the lands into which his profession had introduced him; but his nephew,

Prince Ernst, presented a happy portraiture of the untravelled Hungarian noble. His long fair hair hung in elf-locks to his waist, mingled with the drooping tips of his mustachios; and a blue national pelisse covered with enormous buttons of silver filagree, and Hungarian boots of red tanned leather, completed the attire of the young Magnat, whose forward bullying air bespoke him one whose

> Skill consists in camps,—not courts.

It is true that both himself, Rudna, and the veteran General bent forward to kiss the hand of the fair dame unto whose tardy arrival they had deferred the commencement of their sport; but they hurried over their complimentary ceremonies in order to give the signal for the advance of their several *jägers;* one of whom, to Iölina's astonishment, led in a heavy chain the destined victim of the day.

"And are we come so far to witness the butchery of a tame animal?" she demanded.

"Wait awhile," replied Sigmond, anxiously

inspecting the muster of the boar-hounds. "Bruin will afford us toil and danger yet, notwithstanding the fortnight he has been encaged in the Eglevies *ménagerie.*"

The fact soon justified his assertion. While the Countess was occupied in contemplating the colossal trunks of ancient oaks by which they were surrounded, and the strange habits and heroic air of the Walachians who were gathered together to do hunting-service to their *Herrschaft*, the bear had been loosened from the leash by its *Slowak* leader, and had been permitted to gain considerable ground, before the keepers let slip their eager dogs; and the chase which followed gave no very feeble idea of the more dignified exploits of the olden time, which, excepting amid the recesses of the Carpathian mountains, are now rarely exhibited in Hungary.

To escape, however, the spectacle of that savage scene which she knew would crown the chase,—the baiting of the infuriated bear when at length encompassed by his foes, and the conclusions of his torments by the address with

which a *Slowak* peasant is skilled to throw himself into his lug, retaining the freedom of his right arm in order to rip up, with a single movement, the huge body of the animal—the young Countess giving up her horse to her attendant grooms, retired into the tent; while the whoops and yells of the chase growing fainter and fainter in the distance, proclaimed that she was left to the care of Professor Stringer and the numerous attendants unto whom she had been consigned by the eager Lingotski.

But as she reposed herself in the stillness of the tent, contemplating as she sat the strange chances of a destiny which now fixed her amid the polished elegance of Italian cities, and now in the wildest solitude of a Transylvanian desart, a low faint chant came wailing on her ear, the curtains of the tent were slowly updrawn, and a procession of Walachian women in their holiday attire,—their brows encircled with strings of golden coins, their many-coloured chemises and caftans surmounted by two brocaded aprons, and overspread by a flowing white

drapery,—advanced towards her. Each held in her hand some trifling offering,—a purse of tiny pearls from the Drave,—a garland of woven moss,—a cup of gold-sand,—a vessel of manna drawn from native ash trees,—or a chaplet of fragrant earth, kneaded into beads after the Servian fashion. The language in which their choral invocation was framed, was strange in the ears of Iölina; but the *Ur Nadasch*, who had accompanied the train, was eager to interpret the expressions of their grateful good-will, as they kissed the hem of her garment in token of allegiance.

Great indeed and vociferous was the exultation of the female assemblage, when they learned the gracious desire of the fair being unto whom their homage was tendered, to visit their settlement, which lay within ready distance from the tent; and following their guidance over the mossy ground, Iölina soon found herself, with her interpreter, in the midst of a circle of mud-built huts,—rude as those of an Indian wigwam,—swarming with filthy, ill-grown children,—and apparently destitute of the commonest necessaries

of life. In looking indeed upon the inartificial and slender construction of these frail abodes, she ceased to wonder at the facility with which the Walachian tribes are said to desert or transfer their villages,—wholly abandoning or consuming to ashes a settlement rendered unlucky in their estimation by death, or disease, or the imaginary influence of the evil eye.—But her astonishment was still greater, and deep her feelings of self-accusation, when Nadasch pointed out to her notice the *troglodyte* habitations of the *tsigánys* or gypsies; or rather those cavities in the earth pointed out as human abodes by the steam and smoke issuing from their fissures.

As she stood conversing with the wife of the Walachian chief, and surrounded by her companions, several stragglers whose wild and gaudy, although ragged vestments, attested their gypsy origin, crouched towards her. However willing to have adopted the Oriental mode of approaching a superior,—a gift in hand,—their degraded condition compelled them to assume a different manner of address. They came to beg for alms,

and the Walachian women, drawing nearer to the Countess, and evidently shrinking from contact with their wretched neighbours of the forest, whispered that there were *seers* among them who could read to their gracious visitant the secrets of her future destiny. Half inclined to humour the wild and novel character of the scene, or perhaps impelled by some restless feeling of curiosity, the Countess Lingotski accompanied her golden donation with a request to learn something of the mysteries of futurity; and extending her slender palms, two aged sybils of the group advanced and bent their bleared and haggard eyes alternately upon the fair hands of the Countess, and upon the swarthy countenances of their sisterhood. The Walachians, eager to learn the result of the investigation, were hushed and motionless; and Nadasch alone disturbed the ominous silence, and withdrew the eager attention of the lady of Lingotski, by an erudite dissertation on the origin and character of the gypsy race,—contrasting the *Zigeun* of Germany, the *Cigan* of Bohemia, and the Hungarian *Tsigány*, with the

*Gitano* of Spain, the Italian *Zingano*, the predatory wanderers of England, and the gypsies of central India;—in all and each of which a similarity of countenance, character, and language, may be distinctly traced. But the discourse of the pedant was wasted upon the lovely Countess, whose whole attention was now absorbed by the strange gestures, and mournful exclamations of her oracular visitants; and by the murmur of horror which ran through the Walachian circle as the elder *tsigány* covered her face with her garment, and muttered some mysterious denunciations.

"What saith she? How runs her prophecy?" demanded the Countess, of Nadasch.

"Nay," interrupted the gentle voice of Stringer who now joined the little congregation, "Nay! lady,—it needeth not to know. Your Excellency will scarcely affect faith in the vague visions of untutored savages like these?"

"Nadasch!" persisted the Countess, "what is the result of their observations?"

"Pardon me, madam," replied the worthy

librarian, perplexed and even awestruck in his demeanour. "These people bear more evidently than any other, or I might say solely among the nations, the mark and symbol of divine reprobation. Whether descendants from the first murderer, or from the bondsman Ismaël, we know that their calling is unlawful, and may question whether their knowledge be not of evil derivation. Pardon me, *gnädige Gräfinn*, I cannot permit myself to repeat their idle prognostications."

"How is this?" exclaimed Iölina. "You, my learned friend Stringer, deride them as miscreants and impostors; while Nadasch reviles them as fated instruments of the Father of evil. Who prevails,—which of you is justified in his belief?—Nay, gentlemen,—stint not your courtesy; but repeat to me, fairly and distinctly, the words of the *tsigány*."

The Countess spoke in a tone of decision that brooked not further remonstrance. Nadasch bowed with reverence to his patroness, and after some interrogation of the beldames who felt, or affected, a reluctance to reiterate their sentence,

—he proceeded to render it into German as follows:—

"On the verge of the garden of many flowers lies the horrible, and reptile-haunted desart. Bride of Lingotski! thy pathway is about to turn from the blossomy way, into that lonely wilderness.

"In the recesses of the human heart, the passions of corruption lie intertwined with virtuous impulses. Bride of Lingotski! it is thine henceforth to call those monsters into existence, which live but to crush their feeble companions.

"Thou, and those of thy race, shall perish by the will which is dearest to thee;—some by break of heart,—some by blood outpoured;—and thou wilt live but to feel thyself a wife, yet widowed;—a mother, yet childless, and thy grave shall"—

"Nay! by Heaven above, this must not be spoken—Nadasch, I charge you forbear,"—exclaimed Stringer, shuddering as he listened. As the words burst from his lips, the return and approach of the hunters, bearing in triumph the

ensanguined carcase of the bear, terminated the scene and insured the dispersion of the motley crew.

Iölina Lingotski was still pale and tremulous, when her lord with his noble companions of the chase advanced to salute her; and Lingotski attributing her emotion to the spectacle of the huge animal which the *jägers* had laid at her feet, drew her arm gently through his own, and supported her towards the tent. But so frequently was she forced to pause for breath, as they made their rugged way between the blackened trunks of the forest, that the leaders of the hunt had preceded her, and completed their arrangements for her reception. As they placed themselves at the board on which a repast had been lavishly spread, she perceived that the bear in his proper person was seated as President of the feast; and that next to the chair unto which he was girded, a vacant seat was left for the lady of the revels; over which hung a garland of evergreen oak-leaves, similar to that which had been twined round Bruin's shaggy brows.

"I pray thee banish these childish terrors, and do honour to our woodland usage," exclaimed Lingotski, misinterpreting the paleness that overspread the cheek of his wife.

Unprepared to disobey, Iölina assumed in silence the place of honour; and while the first fruits of every dish were formally offered up to the motionless jaws of her rough companion, and while every glass was pledged with his, in clamorous merriment, she leaned her head upon her slender hand and pondered, even unto tears, upon the afflicting apprehensions which she had wilfully drawn upon herself that morning.

Rallied upon her delicacy of frame and tenderness of heart by her excited and joyous guests, and persuaded by the silence of Sigmond that her depression of spirits was displeasing to him, the Countess lifted the mantling cup to her lips, and replied with disordered but smiling gaiety to the ungraceful compliments of the younger Eglevies. Still Lingotski frowned upon her efforts; and when every feat of the morning's chase had been counted and recounted, and re-recounted,

great indeed was Iölina's joy that the sinking sun glowing through the western branches warned the gay wassailers that it was time to separate.—Once more she found herself, side by side with the Count, on her homeward way; and as she could not vindicate herself from her apparent weakness of the morning without revealing the true source of her sorrow and dismay, she prepared herself to disarm his anger by silent submission. But Lingotski dreamed not of chiding her for a fault which grieved him only as an evidence of suffering and feebleness on the part of the wife he adored. Their ride was tedious and uncommunicative; and not until they had crossed the drawbridge of Szent Miklós, did the sight of a foaming horse, and the approach of a *heiduck estafette* rouse the young Countess from the depths of her self-abstraction. The courier respectfully advancing, placed a sealed packet in Lingotski's hand.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Not for my sake
Are all these tears; you should have shed them sooner.
Plead not the ruin you have made, but say
Why have you driven me to these extremes—
Why sacrificed my peace, and your own fame?

*Arden of Feversham.*

THE newly awakened terrors with which Iölina was already beginning to regard an unwonted occurrence, and the anxiety with which she watched the countenance of Lingotski during his perusal of the letter, were not misplaced upon the present occasion.

"Arm thy courage for sorrow, sweet love," said he, turning affectionately towards his trembling wife. "Prepare thee for a lengthsome journey, Iölina. Thine uncle is sorely indisposed, and prays thee to be with him in his last hour;

and that we may not thwart his earnest desire of giving thee his parting blessing, we must forward to-night," continued the Count. And furthered by the ready zeal and deference waiting upon his authority, in a few hours after the arrival of the despatch, the Lord of Szent Miklós and his agitated Countess were already far beyond the limits of his wide domain.

Iölina, roused by a sense of her uncle's danger to a renewal of her early feelings of dutcous affection, would have hastened by day and night to gratify his dying wishes; but Sigmond was too tender of her safety, too fondly careful of her comfort to permit of her encountering unnecessary fatigue. Never indeed had he appeared so delicately devoted to her happiness, so proudly conscious of her value, as during that hurried journey; and for many a weary league, her head pillowed upon his bosom, did he strive to cheer her mind by sanguine predictions concerning the event of her arrival at Pesth, or to divert her attention by speaking of himself, of his past and repented follies, or of his projects for the future.

"*Thine home in Ofen, Ina, will be scarcely* less strange to thee than unto its master; nor had I dreamed to visit it again. For what solace hath a native Magyar in the solitude of his once regal city?—What joy in the subordinate *tracasseries* of a society once nobly adorned by the ancient names of the kingdom? I doubt me not that the paltry circles of Pesth look with wonder upon the rude seclusion in which I have made my happiness; nor dream that wounded pride withholds Lingotski from luxuriating in the pleasures of those polished countries which he cannot choose but compare with the nakedness of his native land. For although a deep sense of my incapability to redress her injuries renders me seemingly indifferent unto her fallen fortunes, yet were I dwelling amid the palaces of Vienna, a blight of spirit, a consciousness of indignity would render unavailing in my estimation those pleasures of society which delight the fickle heart of our Sidonia. But at Szent-Miklós, dearest Ina, my pride meets no rebuke, and my power to benefit my country emulates my will. At Szent

Miklós, I am blest with the companionship of the loveliest and best of wives, with the devotion of the truest of vassals, and with the supremacy so dear,—haply *too* dear—to my heart."

"And thither, love, will we return," replied Iölina, gratified by his mode of expression. "Where else is there peace for us,—or security—or"—

Sigmond looked upon her with surprise; but attributing her agitation to the critical situation of the Baron, he once more soothed her to repose and sweet forgetfulness; and for many hours she was at peace. As they at length approached the termination of their journey, she started from her slumbers in sudden terror; exclaiming, "Oh! no Sigmond—no!—Do not destroy him; we are innocent,—I never injured thee!" Lingotski was about to inquire the subject of a dream so disquieting; but at that moment their carriage entered the courtyard of the *Zerinische Haus;* and the previous agitation of the Countess, combined with the sight of that eventful spot, deprived her of all further consciousness; and she

was borne in the arms of the Count, and of her attendant Katalin, into the Baroness's apartment.

When her senses returned, she found herself carefully watched by her aunt, on whose altered countenance a genuine expression of grief and anxiety was powerfully depicted; but her first thought was of Sigmond; and when she found that the arm which so tenderly supported her head was that of her husband, her full heart was relieved by the tears which fell upon his hand. "I thought thou hadst gone from me," murmured she. "Speak to me Sigmond, tell me that I am still beloved!"

His reply was forestalled by a message from the Baron who, having caught from an inner chamber the accents of Iölina's voice, earnestly entreated her immediate presence; and Lingotski, after some hesitation, having conducted her to his door, returned to the Baroness; who had expressed her apprehension lest the sudden appearance of a stranger should prove injurious to the invalid.

The Countess was ill-prepared for the havoc

which disease had wrought in the appearance of her uncle. As he sat reclining in his *fauteuil*, his features wore the hue and the marble fixedness of death,—his white head was bowed by debility,—and the imperfect articulation characteristic of the nature of his seizure, could only be rendered intelligible by a deliberation of speech which imparted an unnatural character to his words.

"My niece," said the old man,—exhibiting upon his countenance no trace of the tumultuous feelings struggling within his bosom,—"my niece, draw near to me, and aid me in thanking the Almighty that my dying hours have been prolonged for this interview. I am hastening into His presence, Iölina, his awful presence," continued the old man, fixing his glassy eyes upon her face,—"and *who* may abide therein?"

"The spirits of just men made perfect!" gently answered the Countess, recalled to her better self by the painful solemnity of the scene.

A convulsive smile distorted the features of her uncle,—a smile of horrible expression.

"And whither," said he, with the same slow precision, "whither are bound the souls of the extortioner,—the slave of Mammon,—the oppressor of the needy,—the betrayer of an orphan child,—the ruthless enemy of the son of his own bosom?"

"Uncle,—my dear uncle!" exclaimed Iölina, "banish I pray thee such terrible considerations,—which regard not a father so fond,—a citizen so useful,—a friend so kind, as thyself."

"My niece,—*Countess Lingotski!*—ay, that very name is but a badge of my crime,"—said the half-estranged sufferer, "let not the presence after which I have languished prove an additional snare to my departing soul. Soothe me not with false flattery, daughter of my brother; but listen to my confessions, and grant me thy forgiveness ere I die."

"I do beseech thee to be calm, to moderate these feelings."

"My allotted time is short," interrupted the old man; "and then, the earth-worm for my body,—and the worm that dieth not, for mine

immortal soul! Oh! that a sense of contrition gnawing and cruel as either, could win me one redeeming year,—one month,—one little week!"

The Countess, under the persuasion that some crime of the deadliest enormity could alone urge such bitter self-reviling, trembled as she listened; for she was ignorant that, in life's closing hour, even the truly wise and truly virtuous in comparing the unblemished perfection required of the Christian heart with the errors of their past existence, learn to consider with terror even the most trifling sins of omission, and to distrust the motives of their own best actions. But Josef Zeriny was not of this number. He knew, and through a *just* estimation, that his whole heart and mind,—his wishes and expectations,—had been enfolded in the purposes of his sordid ambition;—that the world,—the polluted, earthly world,—had raised an impassable barrier between himself and his heavenly Judge. To the golden idol,—the molten calf,—he had rendered the sacrifice of his time, his desires, the weal of his corrupted spirit, and the happiness of all dependent upon his will.

"Draw nearer to me, Iölina," continued the old man, "let me lay my hand on thine, and feel that I touch a pulse throbbing with a life-blood kindred to my own. My son hath renounced me,—Cassian hath abjured his father and his country! When I prayed him to return into the land, and enjoy the honours which my providence had accumulated on his head, he bade me leave him to the loneliness of a blighted heart, and an accursed existence. He bade me think upon the pillow of fire I had laid beneath his young head; —of the sacrilegious marriage into which I had forced his precious Iölina,—of the despot into whose loathed arms I had consigned the being whose heart was his own by every sweeter tie of nature;—and so, bequeathing unto his parents his forgiveness,—his blessing unto his beloved,— he bade me henceforward remember him but as one numbered with the dead."

The Countess was too deeply absorbed by the horror and remorse she saw depicted in her uncle's dying face, to consider the peril of her own position at that moment.

"I withered from the hour that unfolded to my heart the well-won hatred of my only child," resumed the miserable man, his lip dropping into an expression of childish sorrow. "And he is far away,—and I must die without his forgiveness,—my Cassian,—my poor injured Cassian!—But thou, my second victim,—thou unto whom, upon her father's grave, I pledged myself to become a father,—thou sweet one! whom I wrested from the bosom on which thou didst so tenderly rely for happiness, to place thee in the grasp of a tyrant,—to alienate thee from home and kindred,—say, canst *thou* pardon me, Iölina?"

"Thou dost abuse thyself, sir," exclaimed the Countess with vehemence. "So truly as I trust Heaven will deal mercifully with thee and me, so truly am I wedded according to my heart's best liking;—so truly do I honour—love—nay! worship my Lingotski."

"Hush!" said the old man, "hush, child! perjury is a deadly sin; nor do such asseverations prove so comfortable to my heart, as would thy

simple assurance of forgiveness. And when thou dost look again upon my Cassian's face, tell him Iölina, that my old eyes would have closed less sadly had they rested on its loveliness; and that a father's errors should have been visited with a less heavy retribution!"

A distant murmur of confusion, and the sudden entrance of Baroness Zerimy interrupted the course of the dying sufferer's self-upbraiding.

"Where is my husband?" whispered Iölina with as much calmness as she could affect.

"The Count has already departed for Buda,—anxious to prepare his long-deserted home for the reception of its mistress."

"I would he had tarried here," replied the Countess apprehensively, "for I feel that I cannot quit my uncle's side."

Nor did she, nor did any of his attendants, forsake him until the last fatal change had taken place, and the sudden cessation of his heavy sighs announced that he was at peace. In obedience to his express desire, Iölina Lingotski, kneeling by his side, closed the eyes of her

departed uncle; and only deserted his chamber to minister to the affliction of his widow. Even the Baroness, the cold-hearted and worldly Baroness, was penetrated with sorrow and vain repentance, as the parting admonition of her husband revealed to her mind the measure of her own wickedness and its punishment; and she called upon the name of her absent son with a fervour of sorrow such as had never before broken from her lips; while her niece, stationed beside her couch, devoted herself to the task of consolation.

The night was already far advanced when the light slumbers that befriended the mourner, released her from her post; and throwing herself into a carriage, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, she crossed the bridge of boats towards Buda. The gates of the fortress were closed; but flew open at the announcement of the Countess Lingotski, and in a few moments Iölina found herself beneath the lofty portico of her unknown dwelling.—The name of Comes Lingotski inscribed upon the peristyle, sanctified her intrusion.

But where were the signs of preparation,—where the tokens of welcome which the announcement of her aunt had prepared her to expect?—All was still,—all dark,—all uninviting; and after a long delay, a half-scared *hausmeister* unbarred the massy portal; but seemed doubtful whether to admit the lady of his lord.

"Call Andreas, fellow;—bid Szava or Aloïs attend the Countess," exclaimed the indignant Katalin, taking his torch from his hand, and ushering in her lady; while the astonished and half-dreaming porter, threw open the ante-chamber of a lower suite, and pointing onwards, muttered that the *tekintetes Gróf* * was to be found in that direction.

Iölina, already bewildered and oppressed in mind, had scarcely courage to profit by the intelligence. With trembling gentleness she opened the door, and invited by the light of a lamp shining in a distant *boudoir*, she stole silently onwards, and found Lingotsky extended upon a

* Tekintetes Gróf,—Hungarian, *gracious Count.*

couch, and as she believed, asleep; for the imperfect light prevented her from noting the strange frown upon his brow, and the unaccustomed working of his features. Still more anxious to repress her breathing, still more careful to moderate her tread, she approached; and bending over the motionless figure, her tears fell amid the clusters of his raven hair, and she was about to impress a silent kiss upon his forehead: when suddenly starting to his feet, he exclaimed with the gesture and voice of a madman, "Off! fiend,—reptile that I have warmed within my bosom, away from me forever! Dost thou dare to look upon the man whom thou hast wronged,—dost thou dar pollute me with thy filthy caresses?—Where is thy minion, woman? Where is 'he unto whom thou wast bound by nature's sweetest ties?' 'Tis to him thy blandishments should be addressed, and not unto 'the tyrant within whose savage arms thou hast been doomed to wither;'—'tis to Cassian,—the lowborn,—lowbred,—lowminded Cassian thine embraces of right belong."

He gnashed his teeth as he pronounced these cruel words; while Iölina speechless, motionless, tearless, stood gazing upon his insane fury. "Oh! thou accurst thing!" he faltered, surveying her with a look of fixed disgust and hatred, "thou falsest thing! was there no other fool,—no other dupe to satisfy thine aspiring baseness but Lingotski? Couldst thou not find a heart to break,—a name to dishonour, but mine? Thou whom I deemed so pure that it grieved me when the summer wind strayed upon thy cheek, or the human eye rested upon its loveliness;—thou whom I,—*even I*,—thy wedded husband,—scarcely dare to approach with the touch of tenderness,—thou to prove false—*thou!*" and he burst into a laugh of hysteric agony, on the subsiding of which he approached her, whispering in a low intense voice, "begone, woman! lest I forget myself, and kill thee where thou standest."

Vain had been the attempt to arrest such a torrent of passionate fury by the feeble opposition of calm reasoning; and even could such pleading have availed to vindicate her, Countess Lin-

gotski would have scorned to implicate the name of her beloved Sidonia in her offence. But she *knew herself* to be innocent,—innocent at least as regarded all wilful deception and injury;—and supported by this cheering consciousness, she endured the harsh taunts of her husband without irritation.

"Ay! meek one;" he sneeringly exclaimed. "Fold thy gentle hands upon thy bosom, pour forth thy ready tears,—bear like a martyr with my violence! But I tell thee, woman, thy submission is falsehood,—thy very thoughts are lies,—or thou couldst not have sealed my eyes to thy wantonness!"

The Countess feeling that she did but degrade herself by listening to coarse and unmerited reproaches, and trusting that on the morrow the mind and ear of her husband would be more accessible, now slowly moved towards the door. "Farewell, Sigmond!" said she mildly. "Thou wilt one day know me better, and repent this unmanly virulence;" and thus, confiding in her own influence, and secure of effacing at her plea-

sure the erroneous impressions he had received,—she left the chamber, and sealed the evil fortunes of her future life.

"*Qui quitte la partie,*" says the old adage, "*la perd!*" and so it is in many a crisis of domestic life. Affection hath at all times, it is true, a boundless empire over the human bosom; but it is wiser to exert its influence in the moment of shame following an unbecoming ebullition of anger, than in the festering soreness of a renewed dispute. Patience will win upon the most incensed heart, and "a soft answer turneth away wrath." Iölina Lingotski in abandoning her own cause, either through timidity or despair, threw aside the buckler with which she might have fortified her defenceless bosom.

Need I say that she slept not during that seemingly interminable night; and that her mind was well nigh distracted by the fatigue, the shock, and the many afflictions she had recently undergone? "My poor Mariska!" murmured she through her tears, as she laid her head upon its comfortless pillow, "'twas in a home like this

thou badst me seek for happiness. Alas! it seemeth not to abide in the haughty palaces of the Magyari!"

Day dawned at length upon her misery; and Katalin, who had not left the chamber of her mistress during the night, was summoned to the ante-room by the *maître d'hotel*. She returned bearing a letter from Lingotski, which ran as follows—

"Return to Szent Miklós, and live there in silence and remorse. Insult me with thy presence,—presume to address me in writing,—or dare to renew thine intercourse with the Betthyani or Zerny families,—and I will cast thee out with thy unborn child to shame and poverty. Let an humble and blameless life plead for thee with him whom thou hast deceived; and forget not amid thy wretchedness and degradation, the coals of fire which thou hast heaped upon the head of

LINGOTSKI."

Ilona, driven to desperation by the gloomy prospects before her, threw a mantle over her shoulders, and was about to fly to Sigmond's

apartment: "He is gone, lady," said Katalin interposing, and interpreting her movement. "Gone before day-break, and without a single attendant; and by his commands the carriage and suite are in readiness for our return to Szent Miklós."

"Gone—*gone?*" shrieked Iölina; "then am I most undone! He deserts me,—he refuses to listen to my vindication;—Sigmond disowns me,—and what have I to do with life or hope!"

During the succeeding miserable hours in which she lay distracted, calling upon her husband,—her father—her uncle—for succour and redress,—a letter from the Baroness was delivered into her hands. Somewhat recalled to herself by the name, she hastily perused and learned from it that, during the preceding night, the Baron Zeriny,—*Cassian,*—had returned to Pesth, recalled by the danger of his father.

"I dare not encounter my son alone," wrote the Baroness, "agitated as he is by feeling that his waywardness hath shortened the days it was his duty to prolong. Come to me,

dearest Ina, and without delay. One word from your lips will prevail to insure peace between us."

"Nay then!" exclaimed the Countess, "I dare no longer delay my departure. A meeting with Cassian at such a moment would indeed aggravate the mischiefs with which I am beset."

Hurrying therefore from the fatal mansion, she commenced her desolate journey; with no better sympathy to uphold her mind than that of the indignant and faithful Katalin; and no kinder protection than that of the *heiduck* guards which preceded her equipage; and in this humiliating and afflicting guise, the lovely Countess Lingotski returned to Szent Miklós.

## CHAPTER XIV.

For life, I prize it
As I do grief which I would spare;—for honour,
'Tis a derivative from me to mine.

*Winter's Tale.*

MEANWHILE Count Lingotski,—whose infuriated temper, unsubsued by the influence of principle—unregulated by education—untamed by deference to the world's opinion,—selfish, haughty, and uncompromising,—exhibited a melancholy example of the character of his caste and nation,—had embarked himself on the Danube in a passage-boat bound for Belgrade; and there, long ere his excitement of indignation had subsided, he addressed to that absent sister whom he little suspected as the origin of his misfortunes, a vague and over-wrought picture of his wrongs.

"*I have been betrayed,*" he wrote; and I call

upon thee, Sidonia, by thine affection for thy brother, and thine own self-esteem, to drive from thy heart and banish from thy notice the degraded Iölina. Canst thou believe, Sidonia,—thou, who art so pure,—that when she pressed her lips to mine, the kisses of another—no, no! I cannot write it! I am now a wanderer, dearest sister; and have bound myself to seek in distant countries, peace for a heart that beats too wildly."

To the *hofrichter* of Szent Miklós he expressed himself in terms scarcely more gracious or more accurate.

"The Countess Lingotski," ran the mandate, "will keep residence at the castle during my absence,—an absence that will endure for years,—perhaps for ever. Yourself, Stringer, Nadasch, and my vassals in general—will hold yourselves submitted to her authority, on which I impose no restrictions save that she quit not my domain for a single hour;—that she receive no stranger within my gates,—nor communicate by letter with myself or any other person. Respect her,—*not* as my wife,—that tie is broken,—but as mother

to the future heir of my honours." These harsh commands, followed by directions for the transmission of his revenues to a banker at Odessa, concluded the letter.

It is not to be supposed that circumstances so peculiar,—so unprecedented,—as those which have been narrated, could fail in giving employment to the thousand tongues of rumour in a city where so little incident occurs to task their idleness as Pesth. While the mighty ones of the land marvel at the facility with which their actions pass into notice, and their most secret follies become the proverb of their neighbours, they forget the loud voice of anger, the rash vehemence of action which betrays them to their own domestics, and through that medium to the whole babbling world beside; and it was even thus the differences between the lord of Lingotski and his banished wife became at once the subject of popular comment. Causes the most absurd and the most dishonouring were invented to fill up the canvas.

A *mauvais ménage*,—nay, even total estrange-

ment and separation in wedded life are so necessarily consequent upon the conventional marriages formed in the higher Hungarian circles, that they excite little scandal or remark; and it was therefore inevitable that a measure of such rigour as imprisonment at Szent Miklós, and of such importance as self-banishment, should waken the most mysterious and horrible suspicions. Every voice in the *Herren Gasse* was raised to point out the dangerous consequences of an ill-proportioned marriage;—the former companions of Iölina, impatient of her elevation, hinted at a thousand hitherto undetected flaws in her temper and disposition;— Dorottya Erdödy (the Countess, her twin grace, was now silent in the dark vaults of St. Eustatius), was eloquent and indefatigable in her pictures of the warm attachment displayed on the part of the injured husband;—and poor Madame Zeriny, into whose unwilling ears all these tidings were poured, knew not what interpretation they might bear. Even had she been aware how much of her husband's declarations

had reached the ear of Lingotski on that eventful evening, it would never have occurred to her mind,—with all her knowledge of his selfish flightiness,—that his jealousy could find subject of displeasure in an attachment that had preceded even his acquaintance with Iölina; and she had no better means of allaying the inquietudes of her mind, or of satisfying the still more indignant misgivings of Cassian, than by addressing her inquiries to the Princess Betthyani, who was still resident at Vienna.

"I have my dear brother's assurances of Iölina's guilt," replied Sidonia, "although unsupported by details, and on such evidence I cannot acquit her; Sigmond's present distress of mind and past affection avouch the justice of her condemnation. Under these circumstances I feel myself bound to refrain from all further intercourse with her family: in expressing which apparently ungracious resolution, permit me to assure my esteemed friend the Baron Zeriny of my continued sympathy and regard."

From the receipt of this letter the mortified

Baroness, whose schemes had been productive of such bitter fruit, and whose old age was unsolaced by the regard of a single human being, refrained from uttering the name,—the key-stone of her former pride,—of the "Countess Lingotski." She had remarked the shudder which thrilled the frame of the young Baron at the sound; she saw too that his health was fatally impaired by his recent afflictions; and desirous to escape from her joyless home and the sneers of society, she prevailed upon Cassian to accompany her to Italy. By this expatriation, the sufferer at Szent Miklós was deprived of her last stay and sole protection.

And how did that lonely sufferer bear up against these accumulated trials,—how support the last and worst—renouncement by the being upon whom she had lavished her affections?—How endure the daily torment of dwelling amongst scenes and persons that had been so recently viewed through the deceptious atmosphere of happiness and gratified love,—how school herself to meet the scornful or mistrustful eyes of every one around her?—

All that resolution could effect,—all that patience, humble religious patience—could insure, was done, and borne, and suffered without a murmur. But as a finely-toned instrument will break when wrought beyond its stretch of power, —as a young plant will wither when the protection of the lofty tree under whose branches it was fostered is suddenly withdrawn,—so withered the mind, so broke the heart of Iölina. For many days succeeding her arrival at Szent Miklós, a strange restlessness seemed to inspire her frame and accelerate its movements. With fevered cheeks and haggard eyes she wandered to and fro through the castle, touching with grasping hands every object that had peculiarly appertained to Sigmond; whose unuttered name seemed ever hovering upon her compressed lips. Neither the entreaties of Katalin, nor the more authoritative injunctions of Professor Nadasch, whose skilful experience foresaw the result, could induce her to lie down and rest. "I would obey you," she replied in meek submission, "could you but calm the impulses which make

me restless. I cannot sleep, good Nadasch; I cannot be at peace, my poor Katalin. My Sigmond is not here,—Lingotski hath forsaken me!"

The excellent man, deeply affected by her emotion and its expression, ventured to remind her of the claims of her unborn child. "May it never breathe within this bitter world," she replied with solemnity. "May it rest with its mother in the stillness of the grave!"

And gradually, almost imperceptibly, the afflicting disorganization of mind and body consequent upon over-excitement, produced its most frightful result; and Iölina Lingotski became totally insensible to the evil and to its cruel cause. A sense of weariness,—of pain,—of oppression—she indeed endured;—of being subjected to personal restraint,—and at length of being overcome by sudden and unprecedented anguish. But how long these sufferings were protracted she knew not; she was ignorant of their nature, indifferent to their termination;—every power of existence seemed disarmed by a deep—deep lethargy.

Struggling with its oppression, she woke at last, or as it seemed to her disordered faculties, *woke* from a very long and uneasy slumber; and found herself stretched upon her couch, in a darkened room, and as she believed, — alone. She lifted her wan wasted hands, and scarcely recognized them as her own;—she strove to raise her feeble voice, but could not yet command its accents; and presently she discerned two persons who, by their voices, she knew to be her faithful Katalin, and the wife of the *hofrichter*, seated in a remote corner of her chamber.

"She will never recover, I tell you Marthon," said Katalin with faltering intonation. "Your lord and mine had better have ended her days by sabre blow or pistol shot, than by this cowardly cruelty."

"Hush!" said her companion; "such words Katalin, are not safely spoken at Szent Miklós."

"Safely or not," answered the rough but frank Hungarian, "I would say it to his teeth. My gracious lady whom *I* know, and *all* believe to be as spotless from evil-thought, or evil-deed,

as her poor helpless infant itself, is marked by his capricious wilfulness with shame that will end in death; and Count Sigmond deserts her in her hour of peril, but that he may pleasure his wayward heart by wandering through lands as lawless and Godless as himself. While his son,—his first-born,—his heir,—is welcomed to the light of life by ourselves,—his hirelings; and is offered at the baptismal font by"—

"Peace,—peace," interrupted Frau Marthon, "the Countess moves."

She had indeed moved. At this first announcement that she was in truth a mother, she had started up for an instant, but only to relapse into total insensibility. But the crisis of her disorder was past, and safely past. Nadasch, in his ensuing visit, announced that life and reason had resumed their action; and soon by her faint questioning and gentle actions she gave token of such perfect self-possession, that her request to look upon her child—the child of her unconsciousness,—was cheerfully acceded to; and the boy was laid beside her, on her bed of anguish

Those who have learned to estimate the joy, and comfort, and ecstatic consciousness of motherhood from the declarations of some beloved wife, some cherished daughter, or happy sister, can ill imagine the rapture,—the all-engrossing intensity of delight which overcame the desolate Iölina, as she pressed her lip to the soft cheek of her babe. A gush of refreshing tears revealed her immediate perception of the likeness it bore to its absent father; for the boy had already numbered many months, and as it turned its full dark eyes upon its bewildered mother, she blessed it, herself, and Heaven, that nothing of Lingotski was absent from the resemblance but his glance of wild ferocity. "Comforter of my blighted soul!" murmured the Countess, as she held its little hand in hers, "promise me to repay the love I already bear thee, with a like affection. The reed on which I have leant, hath pierced me;—one by one, all on whom I relied for earthly consolation, have deserted me! do not *thou* leave me, babe! do not *thou* injure me, my child!" and as the little nursling, pleased by the

sound of an unknown voice, smiled in seeming acquiescence with her demands, she wept again, and so bitterly, that her medical attendants restricted the continuance of an interview so affecting, and consigned her once more to silence and repose.

But the following day, and every succeeding one, her measure of happiness was prolonged, and her strength appeared to return with restored intellect and renewed comfort;—reversing the law of nature, the mother appeared to gather life and health from her child. Already she was permitted to breathe the air of a fresher chamber, from whose windows she was struck with surprise by a token of the extent of mental alienation she had endured; the trees, which she had left leafless and dark, had been clad with their verdant summer mantle during her illness, and were already far advanced in autumnal decay; yet she knew it not. Her ear had been deaf to the voice of time!

And a change yet more complete, yet more striking had intervened in the heart of Iölina.

When her mind had sunk under the oppression of disease, it had been filled with doubts of her own worthiness,—with dread lest the punishment inflicted by Lingotski might not have been wholly unmerited,—with all those misgivings, in short, which spring from the humility of an amiable character mastered by overweening affection for a single object. Her love for Sigmond had indeed invalidated all her best faculties. His looks, his smiles, the slightest expression of his will, the merest shew of his displeasure, had been the prevailing interests of her existence,—her being's end and aim!—It was not so now.—The sense of undeserved injury, of his harsh severity, —had enlightened her heart with regard to his haughty egotism, and to the facility with which he had cast her from his bosom. The very smiles of her lovely infant bore a heavy accusation against the coldness of that father who came not, wrote not, sent not, to acquaint himself with its well-doing.

"My Emerich!" she would whisper to the boy who had received at the desire of his

future vassals, during the insensibility of one parent and the absence of the other, the name of his paternal grandsire, "my Emerich—I will not breed thee up in the practice of Hungarian virtues. Thou shalt never learn to be over-susceptible in thine own feelings, yet callous to those of others; nor shalt thou become haughty and self-proud, my son, if thy mother's patient lowliness may example thy little heart."

By one effort alone,—one single, painful, personal effort,—did the Countess Lingotski on her restoration to health and serenity, appear desirous of recalling the past, or of adverting to the afflicting and delicate position in which she had been placed. Through the authority of the *hofrichter*, she gathered together the vassals of the Szent Miklós estate, even from its remotest districts; ostensibly for the celebration of a solemn mass of thanksgiving in the chapel of the castle. At the conclusion of the service, she took her young son into her arms, and ascending the steps of the altar, she gave audible thanks to God for her deliverance from danger; then rising from her

knees, she imposed silence by an uplifted hand upon the congregation, and with a tremulous but distinct voice addressed herself to their attention.

"My friends!" said she, "my friends and followers!—let it be known among you that the remnant of my days is destined to pass at Szent Miklós; and I pray Heaven that it may be rendered peaceful by our mutual service and good will. I am come among you under a cloud of mystery and shame, which to me it is not appointed to clear up. But I feel that I owe some measure of self-vindication unto that gentle expression of your sympathy and kindness, which I find was lavished upon me during my hours of peril; a sympathy, a loyal love, which I trust ye will not hereafter refuse to bestow upon this babe,—the child of your master's house!" She held up her son towards them; partly to conceal the tears which would fain make their way into her eyes at this allusion,—and a murmur of humble regard towards herself and enthusiastic devotion towards their young lord, burst from the rude assembly.

Once more she withdrew the child from before her bowed head, and tearful face; and turning to the venerable officiating priest, by whom she was beloved as a daughter, and who had sanctioned a measure by which he trusted to set forth, in the eyes of men, that innocence which had been made manifest to himself under the seal of confession,—she deposited the heir of Lingotski in his venerable arms; and renewed her address.

"Friends!—you unto whom I feel it due to clear myself, as best I may, from the foul stigma that hath been cast upon me,—listen, and honour the words which are spoken in the consecrated house of God. *I am innocent*," she exclaimed dropping upon her knees, and raising her hands to Heaven. "Thou, oh! my Almighty protector! knowest me to be spotless of the sin with which I stand accused; and that my faith is unblemished towards my wedded husband; who, in blindness or in cruelty, hath put suspicion upon me and mine. Yet pardon him, oh, God!—and protect his innocent child."

The venerable curate, with more of human

emotion moistening his eyes than altogether became the solemnity of his functions, now approached her, and replaced her boy within her arms. Then laying his trembling hand upon her head: "Be of good cheer, my daughter," said he; "and arise absolved of Heaven, and revered of those who have so long and lavishly tasted the mercies of thy charity. My blessing, and the blessing of thy vassals be upon thee; and if the will of the Almighty permit, secure thee from further sorrow!"—

By this public and energetic disculpation of herself, the Countess was restored to that place which she imagined herself to have forfeited in the esteem of those around her. A delicate and feeling mind can ill-support to know itself an object of suspicion and contempt, even to the lowest of its fellow creatures; and Iölina had vainly sought to sleep in peace under the gorgeous canopies of Szent Miklós, while she believed herself to be held lightly in name and fame by the humble matrons of the village; and now, aided by her active benevolence, and by her cheerful

submission to her destiny, she soon rose more proudly than ever, to the due dignity of her station.

Nor did she lack subjects for enjoyment, or objects of interest in her solitude.—Her boy, her beloved and beautiful boy, grew in strength and intelligence, and animated the doating devotion of poor Katalin into a rapture of wonder. Stringer and Nadasch, keenly alive to the transcendent excellence of their lovely mistress, to her courageous self-reliance and unerring sweetness, wearied themselves in exertions to divert and interest her mind by unfolding to her the fruits of their own able researches into the mysteries of nature; and by rendering easy and inviting, her own path through the thorny ways of science. The splendid library of the castle afforded a ready resource against the weariness of loneliness; and even there, her taste was guided by the suggestions of the good librarian, who was so well skilled to direct her literary curiosity;—whose society was equally acceptable from his conversational powers, and from the tact which

taught him to withdraw into silence when conversation became irksome. Already too the early labours of Lölina in the amelioration of the peasants of Szent Miklós began to reap their reward. A village teeming with flowers, intersected by productive gardens, and embellished by cleanliness and activity, bore evidence to the good sense and liberal kindness which had directed her plans; and without indulging in that busy officiousness which, in the aid afforded to the poor, delights to make war against every ancient and innocent prejudice, and every harmless abuse, the *Grófne*, the beloved and revered *Grófne Lingotski*, became the tutelary angel of those subjected to her rule.

Her own splendid gardens, with their orangeries of molten gold, their hanging terraces and glittering fountains, were called into brighter lustre by the gentle interest she had long taken in their details. Sure of an approving smile or affable inquiry, the ministers of her will wrought zealously in her service. The sun shone as brightly at Szent Miklós as if no cloud of human

prejudice overhung its fair inmate;—returning spring animated the groves with as tender a green, autumn expanded their fruits as lavishly and summer poured forth the varying exuberance of her blossoms upon the fragrant parterres, as graciously as if all the magnats of Hungary had been assembled there to look upon their labours; or as if the self-important lord of Lingotski himself had commanded their exertions.

Meantime that wayward wanderer, stimulated by his perversity of mind, or perhaps by the consciousness of his unfitness to mingle in the society of more polished countries, had shaped his solitary course through Servia, Bosnia, and Romelia, nor paused until he reached the shores of the Bosphorus, where the wonders, and local loveliness, and barbarous splendours of Constantinople detained him for many months. Wearying however of his lonely sojourn in a nation as arrogant and unyielding as himself, among whom he could neither exercise authority nor claim regard and sympathy, Count Lingotski sought the excitement of novelty by becoming the pro-

prietor of a *felucca* and Hydriot crew; and bidding a hurried adieu to the European shore, he committed himself,—his irresolution in every good purpose, and his obstinate adherence to the resolves of his rashness,—unto the keeping of the winds and waves.

After cruising during the summer months in the Levant, he visited in succession the ports of the Morea, of Cyprus, and Sicily;—sometimes tempted by the beauty of the scenery to indulge for a time in inland excursions; sometimes "spell-bound amid the clustering Cyclades;" at others braving the united perils of pestilence and despotism on the Anatolian or Egyptian shores. To all this insane restlessness of mind and body, he believed himself urged by superior sensibility, and an incapability of dwelling under skies which afforded shelter to those by whom he had been wronged. Driven by his selfish petulance into vain extremes, he indulged himself in voluntary martyrdom; and deceived himself the while by an opinion that he had been banished from his home and country, by the

existence of indissoluble ties at once revolting to his feelings, and injurious to his honour. He tortured himself into a delusion of having trusted, and been deceived; and could find no better exercise for his indignation, than in marking to the whole world his detection of the unsuspected baseness of his wife, and his utter indifference towards her child. By this wayward act of expatriation,—an act wreaking upon his own head the vengeance he had prepared for that of another,—he condemned himself to a vagrant existence in countries which claimed little interest in his mind, and whose illiterate barbarism did but serve to confirm and animate the savage imperiousness of his character.

Lingotski sometimes flattered himself that, in his wanderings, his path might cross that of Cassian Zeriny, of whose return to Pesth he had departed ignorant; and however well aware that he had no grounds on which to declare his animosity, and demand satisfaction, however conscious that Cassian himself had been a victim to the cruel deception he was prepared to resent,

the Count would have sought no dearer indulgence for his ferocious hatred, than that of crushing his rival into dust by any means however dark,—however deadly.

Such was Lingotski!—such were the evil passions which national perversity, and an unsubdued temperament had let loose upon the wild wastes of an untutored mind. Among the earlier feudal triumphs of the Magyari, he might have shone as an intrepid warrior; or aided to drive the turbaned Turk and shaven Tartar from the land of his fathers. But as a Magnat of modern Hungary,—that kingless kingdom,—as a citizen of a rising country, or an enlightened member of polished society, he was altogether profitless and unacceptable. Yet upon the deck of his little vessel he would sit with folded arms, gazing upon the blue waters till his eyes ached again, enwrapt in contemplative admiration of his own magnanimity in having forborne to strike the offending parties with a retributive hand; and abusing himself with an heroic conviction of being the most generous, most injured, and most regretted of mankind.

In spite of this unmeaning inflation of character, some softening impulses would occasionally suppress his starts of passion, and moderate his indignation. The remembrance of Iölina, of her lowliness and loveliness, and even a persuasion of her devoted attachment to the husband so ill-matched with her sweetness, would sometimes steal into his mind; and embittering the mental picture he delighted to draw of the home he had abjured, and the ties and tranquil existence he had abandoned, would at intervals prompt him to return,—confess his errors,—throw himself in his turn upon her mercy,—and re-instate himself in the honourable position he had wilfully renounced. But the shame of wayward pride withered the flowers of grace as they sprung; and from an accession of such wild emotions, he would rush forth into some wilder wandering, rouse himself unto harsher severity of word and action, and,—as time passed on, and the decencies of civilized life declined in their influence,—into the coarsest excesses of licentiousness.

Blinded by his presumptuous visions of national and personal dignity, Count Lingotski now persuaded himself that it was necessary, in order to avoid the deference and distinction inseparable from his patrician announcement, to assume some obscure German appellation; and while his lavish expenditure and haughty assumption attracted more notice, and insured more servility than would have waited upon a Lichtenstein or an Estherhazy, he sought to pass unnoticed in the character of Herr Aloïs Brunn, a merchant of Frankfort; a character ill-supported by the extensive *suite*, composed of a remnant of adroit vagabonds from every country he had visited, which formed his escort. Some among this motley crew had been selected for their intrepidity,—some for their submissiveness,—some, as it would appear, for their personal beauty. Among these was a page, an Armenian youth, whose graceful agility, and feminine regularity of features, formed a singular contrast with the almost ruffianly characterization of his companions: but whose frank address and cool bearing

towards their lord, differed yet more strangely from their humble devotedness.

It chanced that Count Lingotski, early in his fourth year of banishment, became involved, in the course of an expedition to the cataracts of upper Egypt, in a serious brawl with the inhabitants of a village in which his lawless train had been quartered for the night. A scuffle ensued, which could only be terminated by the interference of the Aga of the district; the delinquents were immediately imprisoned, and the *soi-disant* Aloïs Brunn found himself submitted to usage infinitely more rough than is commonly familiar to a Magnat of the Magyari. At this irritating and perplexing juncture, the arrival of two Frank travellers who, although unsupported by *suite* or equipage splendid as that of the delinquent, had in their favour the advantages of mild address, knowledge of the language, and diplomatic passports of the most authoritative kind,—gave a new turn to the affray. A few fair words, and a few sequins dexterously administered, bought concessions that obtained concessions in return;

and the culprit and his disorderly band, rescued from their dilemma, were permitted to continue their journey without molestation.

The two strangers, or, as they had now become known to their *protégé*,—Colonel Howard, an English Catholic in the service of Austria, and the Chevalier de Courval, a young Parisian,—received the warm thanks of the Count with gentlemanly cordiality and frankness; and being bound towards the same destination as himself, they unhesitatingly proposed to join him for the remainder of the journey, as a means of securing mutual safety and reciprocal advantage. Having no reason to allege against the arrangement, Lingotski thus found himself forced into companionship with men of his own degree; but who, although they met him upon terms of equality, displayed in every exigency and in every hour, their superiority of address, information, and knowledge of the world.

The Count possessed indeed no qualifications, save those of a fine person and an inherent dignity of demeanour, "to shew the world he

was a gentleman." Tact—breeding—or elegant acquirements he had none; and to supply their place he could no longer, in his assumed character, twirl his mustachios and name himself an Hungarian,—the usual apology for ignorance and ruffianism among his countrymen; and a perception of his deficiences occurred more frequently to his mind during one month's intercourse with Howard and Courval, than might have chanced during a century of Hungarian vegetation. And he had no means of lessening the disparity between himself and his *compagnons de voyage.* Did he seek occasion to vaunt with assumed indifference in their hearing the pre-eminence of his native but unacknowledged country—her freedom, and oligarchical privileges,—Colonel Howard, by a few unanswerable arguments, failed not to vindicate the superior claims of his own England to the crown of liberty, and the palm of national precedence. Did he venture to describe in the hearing of Courval, although with affected unconcern, the luxuries of Hungarian life,—the glories of Szent Miklós

itself,—or the splendour of Buda and its palaces,—his auditor, a Parisian to his heart's core, would reply "*En fait de palais,*

> "Dans sa pompe élégante admirez Chantilly,
> De héros en héros, d' age en age embelli !"

*car je vous avoue, mon cher, que les créneaux, et les tourelles, et les oubliettes de votre petit bout de terre barbaresque, me font pitié. Ausi parmi nous autres on divise le monde en deux parties,—Paris et le désert ; et le monde civilisé, entre La Chaussée d'Antin et le Faubourg St. Germain!*"

Sometimes Lingotski would affect to silence this flippant jargon by a resumption of his most arrogant and most stately dignity; but the heavy sabre-blows of his pride were inevitably foiled by an adversary who had the ready rapier-play of *persiflage* at his fingers' ends; and if by some deviation into a sentimental mood on the part of his companion, he was occasionally betrayed, in his turn, into a moderated display of his mental heroism, Courval would silence him in a moment by, "*Ah! vous voilà aux nues! excusez que je vous*

*y dise adieu ; car je vous avoue que les altitudes m'étourdisent, et que l'exaltation m'ennuie.*" The Count now found from experience that his utmost *hauteur* had no power to silence the flightiness of his companion;—that his coldest reserve was met with laughter, his grandiosity with mystification;—the lesson was a bitter one to the lord of twice ten thousand Hungarian serfs, and the proprietor of the Szent Miklós dungeons!

Howard, on the other hand, whose reserved gravity inspired Lingotski at first with a hope of sympathy, was the most matter-of-fact of human beings. He was indolent by character and constitution, and therefore permitted himself to derive a degree of amusement from the shallow vivacity of his Parisian companion, which his better judgment might have reproved; but he had lived in the world,—the *great* world,—from his youth upwards, and had been too completely disciplined to its conventions to enter into the flights of a character so new as that of Count Lingotski. If, as it has been said, the minds of

men, like the pebbles of the brook, become rounded and polished by friction against their fellows, it was little to be wondered at that the Count's should present so angular a surface, or that the remonstrances of Colonel Howard on the subject of their new companion should be met, on the part of Courval, with a declaration "*que c'étoit un original piquant comme un hérisson de tous les côtés.*"

The Englishman was in truth and heart, that which the Chevalier affected to appear;—a cosmopolite and philosopher. Excluded from the service of his country by religious disabilities, he had pursued his fortunes with distinction under a foreign banner; and had been compelled to seek his happiness and forward his views through single exertion and unsupported self-reliance, until the higher impulses of his nature had dwindled into a degree of selfish *insouciance*. Patriotism, disinterestedness, enthusiasm, become supernumerary virtues to the mere mercenary soldier. "We birds of prey," he would say, "we outlaws of the air, who make our nests in

pleasant places, and find new homes and adopt new habits at every remove, are at once the most philosophic and the most worthless of our kind; our best instincts avail us not, and we are unbound by moral law or social obligation!" But Howard was any thing but worthless. Learned without pedantry, brave without bravado, generous without ostentation, he concealed under his lassitude of demeanour and *pococurante* air, the warm heart and conscientious honesty of his country; and nothing but the sprightly activity with which Courval ministered to his idleness, and the good-breeding which rendered his intercourse so easy and cheerful, would have made his levity endurable to the proud Englishman.

They had quitted Vienna together, in the languid pause succeeding the Carnival, and had since traversed Italy and the Morea; but during their many solitary hours, Courval had found it impossible to penetrate beyond the surface of his companion's confidence; and Howard had some right earnest feelings hid under his armour of proof, which he was too worldly-wise to bare to

the whips and scorns of a brother worldling. The Chevalier had however formed his own guesses on the subject;—and the guesses, or knowledge, or inventions, of a Frenchman lie most liberally at the service of the world. While Lingotski therefore and himself spurred on their Arabian ponies through the sand, he failed not to trace and embellish a highly imaginative picture of their lagging friend,—*ses gestes et faits.*—"Did you but know," said he, in a mysterious tone, "the labour of resolution it cost *notre cher Colonel* to desert Vienna,—where I found him kneeling in a transport of devotion at a shrine fairer and richer than that of your Black Virgin of Altötting,—you would wonder indeed what could have embarked him *'dans cette galère!—Il étoit amoureux comme un Paladin!'*"

"And how did you induce your friend to quit the presence of a beloved object for the mere excitation of travel?"

"Oh! I had forgotten that you too are a Brother in the Faith, and follow no surer polestar than

*Il lampeggiar del angelico riso!*

but,—*sauf votre vocation chevgleresque*, it was Howard's *morality* which sent him wandering into Africa. There was a husband in the case; and neither the Colonel nor the Principessa being indigenous to the *bella paese* where their acquaintance commenced, they could by no means determine themselves to the decorous indecorum of an understood *servitù*;—and so they parted,—and yonder he is,—as yellow and as meditative as love and despair can make him."

"And the lady?"

"I have not the honour to know her; but Howard has lately acquainted me that by the death of her septuagenarian lord she has become a widow, and wealthy as a Begum. And here poor Howard's magnanimity is again in the way; for he has no better prospects wherewith to endow the lady of his love, than the pride and the poverty of an English Catholic cadet. *Que voulez vous de cet imbroglio?*"

On the subject of his own affairs, Courval was more than equally voluble; but when he sought, in return, to make himself better acquainted with

those of "Monsieur Aloïs," he found himself repulsed with impassable dignity; and was fain to vent his dissatisfaction in the ears of the listless Howard.

"*Après tout,*" whispered he significantly, "*moyennant sa magnificence, notre trouvaille mysterieuse ne vaut rien. C'est une nullité grandiose, —pétulant comme un écolier, et maussade comme un almanach!*"

Yet notwithstanding these trifling disagreements, notwithstanding the flippant pertinacity with which Courval delighted to press his inquiries respecting the Armenian page, Lingotski could not conceal from himself that the society of his new friends had become essential to his enjoyment. In spite of his prejudices, he was attracted by the calm manliness of the one,—the exciting gaiety of the other; and he had seldom passed less tedious hours than those devoted to his Egyptian tour. On their return to Alexandria, he indulged in the hospitable warmth of his national character, by persuading both Howard and Courval to embark in his *polacca*, and pass some

time with him at Venice, where he had already secured a palace for the winter. And dismissing from his motley train half a dozen Mamelukes, a Georgian, a Tartar, and a Zantiot, Count Lingotski set sail for the Adriatic and its amphibious city.

# CHAPTER XV.

Infirm of feeling as of purpose,—blown
About by every breath,—a precious judge
For Venice!

THE FOSCARI.

Worlds mirrored in the ocean,—lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces
Whose porphyry pillars and whose costly fronts,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed
Reared up from out the waters.

BYRON.

"*Vivent les souvenirs!*" exclaimed the Chevalier de Courval as, on the day succeeding their arrival, they "swam in a gondola," between palaces encrusted with marble, presenting alternately the romantic barbarisms of Moresco grandeur, and the classical purity of Italian architecture. "Here we have Howard, wrapt in

the enchantments of fairy delusion, with the names of Desdemona and Shylock and Priuli hovering upon his lips;—here am I, with Titian's Danae glistening in my eyes, and the '*fatezze della Biondina*' lisping in my ears;—and here is Brunn, with—what shall I say?—Bedamar's conspiracy lowering upon his brow?"—

"Say less, my good friend," replied Howard, anxious to moderate his sarcastic tone," say less and you will hear the more."

"Let my last word then be a prediction, gentlemen, that before you have accustomed yourselves to cleave these silent waters from Sabbath to Sabbath, you will rejoice to exchange the measured plash of the oars, and the shrill whistle of the gondoliers, for the sprightly luculbrations of Jules de Courval; who, *par parenthése* allows himself but half that period, to become wearied to death of the very names of Piazza and Rialto. One had need to be an eel or a bulrush to flourish in this *diluvio raccolto*."

Howard took a long pinch of snuff, the only reply he ever vouchsafed to his friend's explosions

of verbosity; and addressing himself to the *gondolieri*, he inquired the name of a palace under whose colonnades they were at that moment gliding; at the foot of whose marble stairs several gondolas lay moored;—and from whose balconies the sweetest flowers overhung. "Il Palazzo Megliabecchi," replied the man in the lisping Venetian *patois;* adding some supplementary information which, although it failed to reach the ears of Lingotski or Courval, had the effect of bringing a rush of colour into Howard's face, and of silencing him for the rest of the day.

"You see that my predictions are approaching to verification," observed the chevalier, pointing out this circumstance to the notice of the Count. "Fie, on this city of submarine palaces!—this stone and mortar illustration of the *Fata Morgana*,—this monumental effigy of the deluge! its influence is beginning to deaden all our energies."

"We number but eight days to the Carnival," answered the Count carelessly.

"*Grazie alla madre di Dio!* But why such a supererogation of gratitude?—when Arlecchino

will probably prove web-footed, and Brighella tremble with a tertian."

"Ay," replied Lingotski looking up to the ensign of the double eagle displayed over a neighbouring *Dogana*,—"Dulness hath indeed stretched her leaden sceptre over Venice! Those very voices which were tuned of yore to the honied measures of Tasso, or to Ariosto's wilder music, are now fain to breathe the harsh language of the *Schwabische* swine, who have laid the Bucentaur to rot in vile inactivity upon the waters."

"How!" exclaimed Courval,—"*You* an anti-Hapsburgian? I had believed you to be an Austrian."

"Rather a beaten hound!" shouted Lingotski, more indignantly than altogether became his incognito. "I am an Hungarian!"

Howard roused by his vehemence, looked towards him with interest. "I congratulate you," said he. "You belong to a nation of brave and honourable men; and my liking had long anticipated your avowal." He was about to indulge

in some further question or comment, when fortunately for Lingotski, they paused before the Abrisi palace; and the *chef d'œuvres* of Canova, the Hebe and dying Socrates, diverted the attention of his fellow-travellers from his obvious embarrassment.

"*J'avois bien prédit que ce seroit une partie manquée,*" said Courval, as he entered the apartment of the Count on the following day. "Howard has accidentally anchored himself in the very haven of his hopes; while *we* are weather-bound in a calm. Yonder fair creature whom we saw yesterday ascending the portico of the Palazzo Megliabecchi, turns out to be the veiled Isis of his mysterious worship,—the fair one '*che sola a lei par donna.*'"

"Good," replied Lingotski, yawning.

"*Good?*—my dear friend, consider the horror of enjoying the intervals of a lover's leisure,—*l'alternation d'une liaison à sentiment!—C'est à en mourir!*"

"I, at least shall die of no such distemperature," observed Lingotski coldly. "I trust that

as I was able to drink and eat and sleep previous to my acquaintance with the English Colonel, I may find in the novelties of an unexplored city a very satisfactory replacement of his society."

"You intend in this observation no slight to my friend,—Monsieur Aloïs Brunn?"

"To Colonel Howard? none whatever. I esteem him as an honourable man,—as one *in earnest*, even in his attachments,—and consequently above the reach of any man's contempt."

"In earnest?" retorted Courval, distracted between the *soupirades* of one of his "co-mates and brothers in exile," and the heroics of the other. "*In earnest!* and so am I, and so are you;—which does not render our society the less irksome to those who incline to 'doff the world aside and bid it pass!'"

"No genuine impulse of the mind can become contemptible," persisted Lingotski.

"*None?*—neither vanity, nor envy, nor jealousy?—*Jealousy*, Monsieur Brunn—which?—"

"Shall we visit the *Zeccha* to-day," said the Count, dreading the flight of an arrow from

Courval's venomed quiver, yet irresistibly impelled to resume the conversation as they traversed St. Mark's Place in seeming amity. "Jealousy, Monsieur de Courval, if you would thereby designate the vague peevish suspicion of a weak mind, incurs, and perhaps justly, the scorn of the multitude. But there *is* a passion which we dishonour by the same hackneyed name, and which claims pre-eminence as the most intense of earthly feelings. Such jealousy, for we know it by no nobler appellation, can exist but in an elevated and delicate mind, and resembles its meaner shadow, but as the reptile we crush beneath our feet may image the serpent of the desart, or a cotter's hearth may portray the eternal volcano of nature."

"*Vous parlez avec beaucoup d'onction,*" observed the Chevalier, willing to probe the wound whose sensitive soreness he had unwittingly discovered, and still attributed to his importunate notice of the Armenian page. "For my own share I can plead guilty to no such exaltation of mind as appears requisite to engender this

monster-passion; and as to yourself, my dear Brunn,—you who are so young,—so eminently gifted to win and wear the favours of lady-love, are equally unskilled to dissert upon the character of its propensities.—*You* cannot have proved infidelity or desertion?"

"*Infidelity!*" replied Lingotski in his loftiest tone," infidelity is, incapable of exciting the passion I would designate;—infidelity can cause but the emotions of—contempt—or—revenge. A faithless mistress I should reward with scorn;—a faithless wife, *with death.*"

"You are earnest now, indeed," said Courval, affecting a deep interest in the rhapsodies of his companion, "but what besides infidelity can possibly provoke a jealous mind?"

"A suspicion, or belief, that the bosom we love hath given way to evil feelings,—that the will which guards our happiness hath broken trust,—that,—in some stage of its being,—the heart we would hold sacred hath been haunted by another image than our own.'

"A most Quixotic refinement," answered Cour-

val, gravely, "a most exclusive principle! but you surely jest?"

"*Do* I jest?" exclaimed the Count with bitterness, "do *I* jest—I, who in pursuance of these views, guided by these principles, have deserted my country, my degree,—the wife whom I adored,—the heir on whom my eyes had never rested!"

"*C'est un enragé qui nous arrive des petites maisons,*" thought Courval, as the excited Lingotski strode away to calm his perturbed feelings in solitude, "*un véritable héros de melo-drame!*" and when, in the course of the evening, he encountered Howard on the stairs of the Fenice theatre, he could not prevail on himself to compassionate his evident hurry and pre-occupation until he had disburdened his mind of his new conjectures.

"This has been a day of discoveries," said he, clinging to the arm of the resisting Howard. "*Notre compagnon de voyage, que je pressentois ou Prince, ou poëte, commence à se développer. Figurez vous mon cher, que notre illustre incognito se vante d'avoir abandonné sa patrie, renoncé à une*

*femme adorée, et rejeté son enfant même avant sa naissance, pour faire honneur à une théorie qui,"—*

"It must be himself,—it can be no other than her brother! Sidonia's presage spoke true," exclaimed Howard.

"Without inquiring further, without pausing to guess *who* may be the Sidonia whose very name hath brought the colour into your cheeks, allow me to confirm your supposition. In the many personal narratives with which I have been favoured by our theorizing friend, 'my sister Sidonia and I,—I and Sidonia,' have been the animating impulse."

"Where is Brunn—can I see him?" exclaimed Howard, extricating himself from the Chevalier's detaining grasp.

"He is at this moment seated yonder in our box,—in a *cognoscente* attitude, with a very Byronic curl upon his upper lip."

Howard was off in a moment. "Stay," said Courval, "I have a right to assist at the *dénouement*;"—but Howard stayed not—paused not even for breath to render his explanations

intelligible. His only object, and it was soon and happily fulfilled, was to bring Lingotski into the arms of the Princess Betthyani. "Dearest Sigmond!" whispered she, when the three were seated together in happy confidence in the *boudoir* of the Palazzo Megliabecchi, "you have caused me many tears,—unspeakable anxiety,—but let all be forgotten in the happiness of our re-union."

And the re-union proved indeed a source of happiness to the little group. Sidonia, since the mysterious departure of her brother, had undergone the most painful uncertainty as to his destiny, as well as much secret uneasiness relative to the views of Colonel Howard. The latest act of her deceased lord had been to bequeath his only son, now rising into maturity, to her sole discretion; and to endow her with lavish marks of his continued love and esteem. But although the Princess found in these evidences of confidence the best reward of the conscientious self-government of her wedded life, and in the precious task committed to her care, her best

consolation,—although she was received with a rapture of admiration in the superior circle of that remotest city of the Austrian states which, in accordance with her husband's will, she had chosen for her residence,—yet the strange disappearance of Lingotski,—the grievous interruption of his wedded happiness,—and in a less degree, the remembrance of that honoured and faithful friend who had withdrawn himself from her society only on finding that it had become too dear to his heart,—prevented her from entering into the pleasures of the world, or embellishing her lonely existence with hopes of brighter days.

Iölina,—Sigmond,—Howard,—the three beings whom she regarded with the fondest preference, appeared strangely and hopelessly wrested from her affections; and Princess Betthyani, in the pride of her beauty, and the matured intelligence of her mind, was already sinking into a depression of spirit which accorded ill with her brilliant position in the world, or with the joyous vivacity of her earlier years. Her son too was necessarily withdrawn from her society by the studies and

pursuits befitting his age;—and she was beginning to find in Venice a tedious vacuity, when Colonel Howard,—the well-remembered, regretted Howard,—suddenly presented himself, although upon the footing of distant friendship, at the Palazzo Megliabecchi; and scarcely had the emotions of her secret joy subsided, when she found herself restored through his means to the long lost society of her brother.

With what pride did she point out to Sigmond's observation the resemblance borne by the young Prince her son to his maternal house,—to Lingotski himself; and how earnestly did she long to inquire whether the young heir of his honours shared in the same endearing distinction! But from his careful avoidance of all allusion to Szent Miklós or to Iölina, she perceived that the disgusts which had driven him from home remained unabated, and that his heart was still closed against the wife he had so fondly loved. Such consolation however as she might derive from his friendship for Howard, was amply at her service: and Lingotski, whose pride was of the

most disinterested character, and who found in noble blood a welcome exchange for the gifts of fortune, was warm in his furtherance of the timid suit of the reserved Englishman.

"You love Sidonia," said he,—"my sister loves you in return, and has wealth for both. You are equally noble, true, generous, and honourable;—in Heaven's name what would you more for happiness?" Thus affectionately pressed upon her acceptance, the Princess did not long delay those avowals which insured the happiness of Colonel Howard; who had now a double motive for the anxious interest with which he strove to influence the mind of his wild brother and to win him to a sober character of manly firmness and dignity.

The increasing confidence and daily intercourse of the brother and sister, could not long admit of their relative positions of misconception and delusion; and the busy intervention of the Chevalier de Courval undesignedly tended to assist in their mutual enlightenment. In his anxiety to comment to the fair Sidonia upon Lingotski's strange

principles of action, he unfolded so much of his theory, as forced upon her remembrance the *terms* of her brother's declarations touching the guilt of Iölina; and in her ensuing interview with Sigmond, she confirmed her doubts by such confessions as at once revealed the innocence of his unhappy wife, and made manifest her own involuntary share in the injustice to which she had become a victim.

With all the warmth of her ingenuous heart, she instantly avowed herself guilty of the only deception which had been practised against him; and in her anxiety to vindicate Iölina's sincerity, she hastened to place in his hands that letter which, had its prayers prevailed, would have saved him a world of irritation and injustice. Count Lingotski, whose mind was already subdued into something of a more gentle tone and reasonable frame by the influence and example of his new friend, and by the restraints of an extended society, was staggered, perplexed, and even deeply touched by the feelings of humility and affection expressed in the letter of his wife.

But in acknowledging that the blame of concealment rested wholly with the Princess,—in avowing that his judgment had been in the first instance precipitate, and his vengeance immoderate, he allotted to the absent Countess a new imperfection in his estimation.

"It is difficult," says the adage, "to forgive those whom we have injured!" But how much more difficult for a proud spirit to acknowledge its error,—to sue for forgiveness! Lingotski had not the generosity requisite for such a victory over himself; and although he permitted his sister to express in a letter to the deserted Countess, their mutual sense of having condemned her most unjustly, he shewed no desire or intention of returning to Szent Miklós. False shame,—the consciousness of having forfeited Iölina's esteem,—of having secretly formed degrading connexions,—and the dread of renewing and re-uniting the broken chain of domestic habits, retained him at Venice.

"Leave him to himself," said Howard in reply to Sidonia's entreaties that he would urge the

claims of Iölina. "Leave him to time and nature. The sight of your son, the sight of our mutual affection has already softened his heart to gentler emotions; and open interference with his intentions would but arm his pride against yielding to their suggestion."

"I dread the influence of Courval," observed Princess Botthyani, still unconvinced. "Sigmond, with all his pride and affected self-possession, is little proof against ridicule; and the Chevalier has it in his power by one fool-born jest upon '*les scènes de famille*,' or '*l'abjuration magnanime d'un mari désabusé*,' to mar all our endeavours."

"You are mistaken, dear Sidonia. Courval, unintentionally, I acknowledge — has served our cause with better weapons than our own. His restless love of change has lately expended itself in projecting a Carpathian tour; and I have succeeded in persuading him that it could not be undertaken more advantageously than under Lingotski's protection. We must not let his intentions languish; animate them if you can by

a description of the wild beauties of Szent Miklós,—its boar hunts, and bear hunts,—its mines and forests; try the effect of your eloquence with him Sidonia — my own heart suggests that it will be mighty indeed."

"And yet," replied Sidonia, "I dread the influence of his worldly maxims and selfish views upon my brother at this delicate crisis."

The apprehensions of the Princess were more than justly founded. The Chevalier de Courval possessed one source of influence over the mind of Lingotski, wholly unsuspected by those so deeply interested in his happiness. By accident, or by favour of his prying curiosity, he had made himself master of a secret which the Count had too much respect for Howard to confide to his ear; although it involved embarrassments which his assistance might have overcome, and which formed a chief obstacle to the Count's return to Szent Miklós.

Harák the Armenian page, whose questionable appearance had so often called forth the insinuations of Courval, had opposed with bold per-

severance every prayer, command, or attempt at bribery, by which Count Lingotski sought to insure her return to her native country. "I forsook my home," said the unhappy creature, "renounced my sex, my fame, my hopes of happiness at your bidding. I followed you from affection,—no meaner motive. Ere you took this Frank into your counsels, they were honourable ones, Lingotski; and though you were even then a-weary of me, you thought not to cast me out to shame;—for you knew that my father's doors were barred against me, and that it was yourself had closed them irrevocably against the outcast. Your love is past,—mine perhaps is failing,—but hatred or policy must henceforth bind us together.—Return if you will to Hungary,—I shall still follow your footsteps, in the guise of an humble and unimportunate servant, but *inseparably*. You told me you had a wife whom you loathed,—a child whom you disowned,—and bade me replace both; and to-day, you meanly return to their arms, and would throw me off to misery and dishonour,—but this shall not be

You must trust to the discretion which has still kept your secret, but you must not deny me the poor boon of yielding you those services which perhaps none other would accept from hands so degraded as those of Harák.—By the heaven which is above us, Lingotski, you shall never force me to leave you!"

In vain the Count, who had now determined on revisiting his long-deserted home, attempted to counteract this perplexing determination,—in vain he stormed and threatened. Harák was as impetuous and as resolute as himself; and after intimidating the astonished Courval by tossing the bag of ducats with which he had undertaken to arrange the affair, into the Canal Grande, the page succeeded in gaining the day.

"Sigmond, I perceive, retains the services of that insolent boy," said Howard as he accompanied his friends to the shore whence they were to embark for Fiume. "My suspicions are thus proved groundless;—*as a man of honour*, he would not of course pollute the habitation of his wife with a disguised mistress."

Courval replied by a smile of doubtful meaning, and a burst of enthusiasm respecting the promised pleasures of their expedition. "Think," he exclaimed, "of a *bailli du village* haranguing us in Latin,—of a Latin *carte des vins!* Think of a postilion bearing a patent of nobility in his boot;—of the delicious privilege of putting an Austrian uniform on your valet's back, and giving him ever to the rattan and the gauntlet if he should fail to polish your own!"

"Think of *me*, Sigmond," whispered Sidonia, "when you embrace your child, or when you receive Iölina's forgiveness."

"I trust," answered Lingotski with a look of alarm, "you have no cause for anticipating such a scene? Courval would be a bad spectator for a *comédie larmoyante;* but he will save us from the restraint of a *tête à tête*, and the Countess must learn from my example to shun retrospection. Yourself Sidonia, with your son, and I hope with your husband, will join us when the return of spring shall re-open the roads;—by that time all will be forgotten. *Au revoir.*"

"Farewell Lingotski!" said Howard, pressing his hand with a brother's warmth; "trifle no longer with your own happiness, nor neglect that of others which is equally in your keeping. It is a charge for which you are heavily accountable."

"I would you had accompanied them," observed Princess Betthyani, thoughtfully, as they stood watching the white sails set, and the little vessel stand from the shore. "I would I had urged your departure;—for if I mistake not, Courval's presence will ill advantage poor Ina's cause. I could half regret that I had persuaded my brother to visit Szent Miklós." And this feeling, and the fears entertained by Sidonia were painfully aggravated by receiving, some days after the departure of her brother, the following letter from the Countess Lingotski.

"You ask my forgiveness, dearest Sidonia, for the part you have taken in weaving the dark tissue of my destinies;—I had been better pleased had you sought my pardon for the facility with which you lent your ear to the tale of my imaginary guilt. I had trusted that your friendship

would judge me less harshly, and therefore little imagined that your credulity had withheld from Count Lingotski's knowledge my only means of justification,—those means which my unwillingness to expose you to his displeasure had rendered unavailing to myself. Receive, however, dear sister, my thanks for even this tardy expression of your sympathy and compassion.

"At the period of Lingotski's cruel desertion, I did not think I could live to acknowledge a sorrow unconnected with his estrangement. It were fruitless now to say how truly I loved him,—for those feelings exist no longer; yet my wasted youth,—my broken health,—my cheerful submission to his will attest the strength of my past attachment. An intensity of wife-like devotion rendered me patient under his cruelty,—but it could not blind me to the heartlessness of his coldness towards his innocent child; and it was in gazing upon my poor little abandoned Emerich that I learned to steel my bosom against his father. In the solitude of my desolate existence, I have taught myself to derive pleasure, if not

happiness, from a thousand objects wholly independent of his will;—not such indeed as Sidonia was fated to enjoy under the happy shelter of an admiring husband's esteem,—not such as I trust she will long live to share with the affection of the beloved object of her maturer choice;—but such as a heart so early blighted as my own, might cherish with humble gratitude. My life at Szent Miklós has been one of calm, silent, every-day enjoyment,—derived from lowly but unfailing sources,—and sanctioned by the mercy of that high Heaven which its blameless tenour tended to propitiate. One sorrow,—one single affliction,—embittered its course,—of that hereafter.

"By what I have said, Sidonia, you may learn that my heart has long thrown off the cares and hopes and expectations of the ardent affection which was its former boast,—that its pulses have long been chilled into the calmness of indifference. I feel that it is no longer in my power to love Lingotski; he can neither justify his selfish violence in my sight, nor resume his mastery over my feelings. I pardon him,—but no sense

of duty commands me to grant him a renewed attachment. Judge therefore whether you do wisely in persuading him, as you say you have done,—to visit Szent Miklós. Were my inclinations consulted, or my opinions respecting our prospects of happiness regarded, I should pray, for both our sakes, that we might never meet again;—my strongest motive for this desire remains to be told. You, whose letter expresses so forcibly the exulting pride of a mother's heart, —you who picture so fondly the personal endowments of your son, and boast so warmly his resemblance to Lingotski, will imagine the bitterness of heart with which I confess that my poor deserted boy,—my fondly-loved Emerich,—is—a cripple!

"The grievous circumstances of his birth bereft him, through some fatal injury, of his fair proportions; and the deformity although slight, is pronounced to be irremediable. All that Hungarian art could suggest has been vainly tried; and when I look upon his sweet expressive face, and listen to his gentle words of intelligent

tenderness, I am rather inclined to bless the mercy which has rendered his misfortune so little painful to himself, so little revolting to others, than to envy the mothers of unblemished children. But although I feel to love him a thousand fold the better for his infirmity, I know that Lingotski's vain and unforgiving eye will rest in coldness upon my son,—and *that* trial, that bitter trial I would willingly shun. Keep him from us, dear Sidonia,—save us from sorrow and humiliation. We live happy in the obscurity of our lonely destiny; do not let him mar our peaceful retirement with the clamours of his pride. Farewel sweet friend of my early choice; my love and prayers attend you.

"Alas!" exclaimed Sidonia, as Howard returned the letter to her hands, "does it not appear that I am a destined enemy to my poor Ina?—She is right,—it had been better that my brother should never revisit Szent Miklós!"

## CHAPTER XVI.

'Out, hunchback!'
'I was born so, father!'

BYRON.

COUNT Lingotski was ill prepared for the emotions by which his mind was overcome on his re-entrance into Hungary. Experience had not forewarned him of the effect produced upon the sensitive ear, after long absence, by the sounds of our native tongue,—on the eye, by the aspect of familiar sights and faces,—on the heart, by the consciousness that the earth we tread is that of our fatherland!—and overwhelmed by feelings which he vainly strove to disguise, he gave himself up to their sweet illusion. Every object by which he was surrounded, seemed through the invisible chain of association to appertain unto

himself. The very sky,—the air,—appeared of right his own; and when, at the mere announcement of a Lingotski,—a name time-honoured in Hungary,—crowds thronged to look upon his face, and kiss his extended hand, his pride and presumption, the ruling foibles of his mind, prompted his wonder at the blindness and wayward self-denial which had so long detained him from his native country, and withdrawn him from the deference he knew so well to prize.

But to what a height of wild enthusiasm were the demonstrations of the populace excited, as he entered upon a district forming part of his hereditary domain!—where he was welcomed as proudly as a triumphant conqueror,—and where every village,—every church,—every coppice,—bore its own peculiar interest and interpretation unto his heart! In vain did Courval,—to whose foreign eye the singular aspect and unfamiliar character of the *Militarische Gränzen*, or military frontier wore an unintelligible seeming,—implore an explanation of its ordinances, public and domestic. He was left to see, hear, or imagine,

as his solitary judgment might suggest; for the mind of Lingotski was wholly engrossed by its own excitements, and his attention claimed by the importunate vassalry which surrounded his carriage. "My dear Count," exclaimed the Chevalier, in the desperation of his curiosity, "my gracious Lord and Magnat!—these boy and woman soldiers, tell me for the love of Mars,—are they enlisted by birthright in the great regiment of the nation?—are they destined for battle-field as well as for parade,—and do they betake themselves to their distaffs in the intervals of guarding their debateable land against the turbaned infidel?"

Lingotski replied only by a look of vague abstraction. His heart was far away,—his mind had wandered to Szent Miklós; and if at that moment of softened feeling, Iölina had appeared before his eyes, in the bright maturity of that matron beauty and the gentle charm of that endearing humility which he had forced himself to abandon,—the uncontrollable tumult of his bosom would have prompted him to rush to her

feet,—confess his errors,—and endow her anew with the lavish gift of his whole affection. But the warmth of his yielding heart was destined to be chilled by an unexpected check, ere he approached the castle. The vassals of the Szent Miklós domain had lived too long and too happily under the gentle governance of Countess Lingotski, to be insensible to her wrongs, or to the humiliating negligence testified towards herself and them, by the prolonged absence of their lord. His early career of daring independence had tempted them to regard his character with expectations of service and redemption from national wrong, which his after-life had left unfulfilled; and the bright promise which his intemperate boyhood had worn in their eyes, had only subsided to give place to the mortifying darkness of a more than common indifference towards the interests of that native country, unto which he had sworn an entire devotion. Whatever humiliation or reserve might have attended his defiance to her chartered rulers,—had he even provoked the worst mischances of revolt, and

drawn upon himself the fatal destinies of Ragótski or Tekeli, he would have remained the idol of their allegiance, the planet of their blind worship; but he had left them to their chains,—had fled in disgust from their shores,—had expended the revenues wrung from their toil, upon foreign minions,—bequeathing their best interests to the feeble hand of a woman and a child!

And that helpless woman, that deserted child who had been born and nurtured amongst them, became in the end dearer to their loyalty than the remembrance of their absentee *Herrschaft*. Iölina had exhibited too active a sympathy in their wants and afflictions to remain an object of antipathy or indifference; and even the infirmity of the little Emêrich had found favour in their sight. "His father," said they, "boasted the lofty presence of the *Lingotskische* blood,—his father was bold of limb, and expert of hand. But what hath his agility availed us?—what, his high courage,—his well-knit strength? Hungaria hath no longer a battle plain on which such energies

might advantage her feebleness;—and Count Emerich will unite the wisdom of the serpent with the gentleness of the dove, and will serve us in the councils of our enemies, wherein alone our struggles may win redress." In this persuasion they had transferred their hopes to the young heir of Lingotski; and as they were aware, vaguely indeed, but satisfactorily to *their* apprehensions, that he had been deserted and stigmatized by the Count their reigning lord, they listened to the announcement of his return to Szent Miklós with distrust and regret. In vain did the *Hofrichter* attempt to animate their feelings into a better train; they turned sullenly to their accustomed occupations, and marked no interest in the coming change.

Meanwhile Sigmond, who had foreseen some wondrous exhibition of loyal attachment on entering the district of Szent Miklós, who had even surmised,—deceived by the remembrance of Iölina's devoted tenderness,—that his wife and child would probably anticipate his arrival—and meet him by the way, was successively amazed,

mortified, and enraged by the silence and solitude which attended his advance. So firm had been his reliance upon his own importance, that he had even hazarded the expression of his expectations to Courval; who, secretly delighted to mark the repression of the lofty Magyar's presumptuous arrogance, affected to soothe his chafed spirit by predicting a concentration of the ardent loyalty of the vassalry, in some mighty display at the very gates of the castle. At length they entered the glorious avenue of Szent Miklós;—all was still tranquil,—still lonely. But Lingotski had no longer leisure to note this perplexing neglect;—he had caught sight of the home of his infancy, and was speechless from agitation. The drawbridge was lowered on the approach of the train of equipages,—and at the foot of the great stair, the travellers descended from their carriage.

It is a trying thing,—a bitterly trying thing,—to receive in our father's hall the welcome of a stranger. The want of cordiality and the seeming remissness which, in the present instance,

aggravated the humiliation of Count Lingotski, arose in part from the restless impatience which had caused him to anticipate the hour announced by his *heiduck* for his return,—and partly from the natural changes inevitably consequent upon the lapse of five long years of human life. Many of his grey-headed servitors were gone to their graves;—many were removed to other settlements upon the estate;—and of those who replaced them, and who now hastened to offer him their homage, the greater part were grieved and thwarted by their Lord's return. "The Countess?" demanded Lingotski with tremulous lips, in reply to their gratulations;—yet scarcely daring to listen to their information.

The folding doors of the saloon were thrown open at his inquiry; and as the travellers entered, Iölina in the graceful dignity of womanly loveliness advanced towards them. She was deadly pale, but apparently self-possessed, for not a shadow of perturbation was visible on her sweet countenance, or in the measured music of her gentle voice; and as the arrival of the chief

officers resident on the estate, who now respectfully approached to tender their allegiance to the Count, soon filled the apartment with crowded confusion, she was the better enabled to maintain her shew of calmness, and to receive her husband and his friend with a cordial and unembarrassed welcome. She inquired with an air of interest into the particulars of their recent journey, and found courage to reply to the hurried questions of the agitated Sigmond, with the cheerful ease of — perfect indifference!

This was an offence of which the expectation had never glanced across the mind of the Count. Although he had so warmly protested to Courval against "*les scènes de famille*," and had schooled himself to believe that time and extended observation of the world had effaced every vestige of his early tenderness for Iölina, he had still trusted to the existence of that fond devotion on her part, which was to overcome all sense of injury; and of that patient duty which was to enable her to receive unmurmuringly the bitter trials and the cruel abandonment with which it had been his

pleasure to reward them. That she could forget him, he had naturally deemed impossible;—that she could look upon his tardy return as aught but an act of grace and generosity had never occurred to the limited views of his egotism; and when he gazed upon that unimpassioned and noble brow whose calmness seemed to place him in the wrong, and to render that very wrong insignificant,—his indignation equalled his astonishment; and he secretly resolved to effect a rapid change in the feelings of the Countess. He hesitated indeed whether to win back her estranged affections by gentleness and love, or whether to crush the offender into submission by the loftiness of his supremacy;—but for the latter method he felt too much a stranger in that home wherein habitual rule had given her the ease of superiority. He could not even gather courage,—while the Countess with graceful courtesy was occupied in marking out to his guest the points of view visible from the oriel,—to ask for his son; and it was not till he retired to refresh himself from the fatigues of his journey, and was ushered

by the *hofhausmeister* into a chamber where his page and other attendants were busily arranging his baggage, that he despatched him to bring the boy to his presence.

The *maître d' hotel* immediately returned, followed by the Countess herself, leading the little Emerich in her hand. On entering the room she graciously motioned to the attendants to continue their task, and advancing close unto her husband, "Count Lingotski," said she, with lips as cold and pale as marble, "I was unwilling that you should receive your child from any hand but mine. He is little gifted, alas! to gratify your pride; yet let me trust, let me implore," she continued, joining her hands, "that his guiltless misfortunes may not wholly estrange him from his father's love."

Count Lingotski, startled and deeply affected, bent upon the boy a gaze of stern but anxious inquiry. He saw a noble countenance,—an open brow, to which his own dark eyes imparted a premature and melancholy intelligence;—but the distorted figure and feeble gesture of the child, as

he knelt low at his father's feet,—thrilled him with horror and mortification.

"Iölina!" he exclaimed—

"Exists no longer!" answered the Countess with gentle firmness. "But we are *friends*, I trust," said she, offering her hand with sweet persuasiveness to Lingotski;—friends who will pass henceforward through their uneventful lives with calm and mutual regard. Retrospection could not but embitter a nearer, and dearer hope,—for a blighted tree may not revive."

"This is no time," said the embarrassed Sigmond, looking round upon his train.

"Pardon me," observed the Countess, "it *is* the time,—and I trust the last,—on which our intercourse may be disturbed by unavailing reminiscences. Let our existence,—*our friendship* date from this hour;—and stand upon too sure a footing of mutual confidence to admit of one word of discord or misapprehension."

She withdrew as she spoke; and Lingotski gazed upon the closing door as one awakened from a trance;—but of many conflicting feelings,

fury,—the rage excited by humiliated pride, rose uppermost to his lips. "Go! shapeless imp!" said he to the trembling child, who hastened to obey the first harsh word of authority that had grated on his trembling ear,—"go! shapeless urchin! follow thy cold-hearted mother! and Lingotski's curse rest upon ye both!"

"Shame on thee! shame on thy unmanly soul!" exclaimed the dauntless Harák, who had alone presumed to linger in audience of the scene. "Thy Countess is a noble creature, Lord of Lingotski, and I reverence the contempt she hath cast down upon thee."

Before the parties met again, Sigmond, who dreaded lest the Chevalier de Courval should discover the disappointment of his insolent expectations, had banished every trace of anger from his brow. He affected the cheerful easy tone of perfect contentment; and even attempted to address the Countess with the unmeaning gallantry of a man of the world; and though he secretly ground his teeth with rage as he gazed upon the serene loveliness of her intelligent face, he com-

manded himself sufficiently to second Courval's animated details respecting the various countries they had traversed, and the adventures they had encountered; and Iölina by her inquiries respecting Sidonia, Howard, and the young Prince, the representative of the Betthyanis, found a ready resource against the painful embarrassment of her position. One reply of Lingotski's,—she could not believe it an inadvertent one,—cut her to the heart. "Sidonia's son, ask you?—Sigmond Betthyani is a glorious creature;—the stamp of true nobility is upon him, and the trace of his high lineage animates his whole being." Iölina heard the taunt, thought of *her* boy, and shuddered!

On the morrow however, the various occupations and diversions which engrossed the travellers, relieved her altogether from their presence;—where there are woods and waters to yield up their prey, a lady's bower is secured from the haunting of masculine intrusion. She saw the trusty pair, attended by a countless troop of *jägers* and *forstmeisters*, gallop off to the forest;

and she turned to her neglected boy to weep, and to meet with consolation.

Emerich, like many, or most of his fellow-sufferers in physical misfortune, had been counter-gifted by the mercy of Heaven with an excess of intellectual endowment; and his gentle disposition and lively mind had imparted to his countenance that earnest and premature expression, which so generally characterizes bodily infirmity in children. He had lived from his birth's first melancholy hour, in the bosom of the fondest of mothers. His claims upon her care had been undiverted by those of any other domestic tie;—unshared by the influence of any other affection;—her whole thoughts had been his,—her whole time;—and his little feeble life had been fostered by her ceaseless attendance, and his little gracious spirit formed and tempered by her gentle schooling. Young as he was, he had been taught to understand the whole extent of his misfortune;—that he had been marked, on the threshold of existence, by the chastening hand of Heaven,—that he had been thrown off and forsaken by

his own father! But he also knew himself to be wholly beloved by a consoling mother, and he resolved to *entitle* himself to her involuntary tenderness;—fortunately, his humility of mind had not enfeebled the character which it rendered so lovely. The Countess had conscientiously laboured to extend his filial devotion to his absent parent; and seconded by nature's unfailing instincts, she had succeeded in fixing the warm hopes and interest of her little Emerich upon Lingotski's return. "Every child in the hamlet has a father but me," he would say. "You tell me, mother, mine is far away; teach me to win him home again, dear mother, that I may look upon his face and seek his blessing."

And now that absent father had returned indeed,—and Emerich had looked with rapture upon his face,——and had been driven with curses from his presence!—But the knowledge of that horrible denunciation still withered silently in his little heart;—his high courage, and his value for his mother's peace of mind, had induced him

to subdue his sorrow in secresy. "My father," he had observed to the Countess, and it was his only explanation, "will scarcely disturb the peaceful seclusion of our life, dearest mother. He will not, I am persuaded, again summon me to his presence."

"Shame be with him then," said Katalin, whose faithful love was now centred in her little charge.

"No shame, good nurse," said the boy cheerfully. "My years,—my weakness, render me fitter to live under my kind mother's tending, than in my father's bolder presence. Do not grieve, mother;—let me dry these vain, vain tears,—your boy is happy in your love, and asks no other blessing, no other countenance."

But Iölina, although she turned at his sweet bidding a smiling look upon her child, and drove back the bitter tears into her heart, could not fail to grieve with all the softness of a woman's heart over the last fatal change which had befallen her destiny. Her power to insure

the happiness of her vassals,—her power to occupy her attention in the cares of her household,—her power to indulge in the self-communing of solitary study and reflection, were taken from her,—and what had she in exchange? The castle of Szent Miklós was filled, immediately on the arrival of Lingotski, with crowds of noble visitants who, during his absence, had marked their scorn of herself by contemptuous avoidance. Instead of seeking that dignified seclusion which had betrayed his devotion to her society, in their earlier and happier days of union, he now seemed to place his happiness on the daily assemblage of troops of friends, and of friends' friends,—however incongruous to his own feelings and pursuits. Courval indeed was the ostensible object of all this waste of hospitality; but Lingotski sought in truth only to place the security of a crowd between Iölina and himself; and to drown in the tumults of festivity those feelings of remorse, and that consciousness of indignity which were rankling in his heart. Meanwhile Emerich's prediction was

fulfilled,—he never again sought to look upon his son.

Could Iölina have imagined that the feelings which spread a still increasing gloom over the brow of her husband were chiefly caused by her estrangement,—could she have believed that her improved beauty and bewitching charms of manner and address had more than renewed her first attractions to his eyes,—could she, above all, have conjectured that his bosom was disturbed by the bitterest compunction and regret, it is possible that she might have softened from her mood of cold reserve; for what woman is proof against the lingering tenderness of a heart which has once been all her own?—or what woman can wholly throw off her allegiance to the husband of her youth,—to the father of her child?—But, stimulated by Courval's wilful misrepresentations, she attributed to feelings of hatred, hatred against herself and her helpless son, every dark cloud that passed over his countenance, every stern comment that fell from his lips. Sometimes he withdrew on pretext of

indisposition from her presence; and so satisfied was she of the sincerity of his assumed aversion, that on such occasions, she forbore, for pride's sake, for the sake of modest self-respect, to extend towards him any of those conciliatory attentions which she would not have hesitated to offer to any one of her guests. Yet had she known with what starts of passion he secretly gazed upon her fair face, and how fondly he was inclined to fold her to his bosom, her very anxiety to win his forbearance and endearments towards her neglected child would have prompted her to attempt the difficult task of forgiveness, forgetfulness, and renewed affection.

The Chevalier de Courval had indeed his own views in the confirmation of her error. From the first moment he had cast his eyes upon the beauty, the singular and powerful beauty of Lingotski's wife, his amazement at the chimeras which had bewildered his visionary brain and so long detained him in exile, was unbounded. That any man could forsake so sweet a creature, or permit himself to mistrust her purity of heart

appeared unaccountable,—even to a Frenchman but he kept a careful watch over the expression of his admiration and of his faith; and "gave no sign" of the unprecedented emotions which Iolina's rare loveliness had wakened in his heart. *He* it was, meanwhile, who urged the Count to all his restless and unquiet movements; *he* it was who suggested his frequent excursions and absences from the castle; who filled its halls with tumultuous festivities and licentious rioting; and whose hypocritical condolences continually forced upon his remembrance the misfortune of his heir, and blinded the father's eyes to his many good gifts, and redeeming qualities.

It was the Chevalier de Courval too who, "close at the ear of Eve," delighted to record the expressions of disgust which disappointment and rejected affection sometimes forced from Lingotski's lips, and to hint at the excesses which had disgraced his life during his wandering years of self-banishment; and this was done under such a mask of gentle sympathy and affected expectation of amendment, that it could not offend

even the gentle and excellent Iölina. It is true the language of the world had been long unfamiliar to her ears; and the polished deference marked towards her by Courval, lent an additional charm to his animated description of foreign countries,—to his tidings of the cherished home of her youth,—and to his piquant anecdotes of Sidonia and of her affianced lover; and such discourse frequently induced her to shun the rude untutored Hungarian guests of the castle, in order to give her whole attention to her husband's chosen friend. He was ever at hand to listen to her music, direct her pencil, and improve her knowledge of languages which had been formerly familiar to her as her own. His low faint praises, his undivided devotion, had a charm in her estimation which his patient and solicitous attentions to her little Emerich, heightened into the friendliness of sincere regard. The boy too, *loved* Courval, who was of a race and character equally unfamiliar and attractive to his childish fancy; and who by his skill and vivacity had so won upon his affections, that he would follow the

footsteps of the Chevalier with a wearyless assiduity that on one occasion even betrayed him into the presence of his father.

It chanced one morning that the orangerie was filled with the noble visitants of Szent Miklós,—the Governor of Herrmannstadt and his *état major* among the rest,—when the little fellow in the heat of a chase after the retreating Courval, who had enticed him from his remote terrace,—suddenly found himself in the midst of the group. Lingotski, who had been that morning more than commonly irritated by the Chevalier's jests upon his "*passion malheureuse pour sa propre femme*," and by his repetition of some comments which he asserted to have been made by the company upon the frightful distortion of "the elfin heir," was infuriated by this untimely intrusion; and seizing the hapless boy by the arm, he bade him begone from his presence, in a tone of loathing and contempt. "Go! changeling!" said he, "go, herd with the slaves of the household,—less degraded, less miserable than thyself. Go! outcast of nature! thou beseemest not this presence."

"And what dost *thou* beseem, oh! heartless man," exclaimed the undaunted child,—his little spirit rising under the insulting scoffs of his father. "What presence dost thou beseem, who art the cause of all my sweet mother's tears,—the cause, if Katalin says true,—of my affliction, and those grievous defeatures which now move thy scorn!"

Lingotski, enraged beyond patience, rushed forward to spurn the bold offender with his foot; but the young Armenian, whose constant attendance upon the Count insured his observation of the whole affair, interposed without hesitation between them. He seized the child, and clasping it closely within his arms, exclaimed, "touch him, unmanly savage, at thy peril!" Then suddenly disappearing from the orangerie, he paused not till he had laid the still trembling Emerich safe at his mother's feet.

The boy anxiously attributed his safety to the intrepid protection of young Harák; who was retiring from the chamber, when Iölina in the warmth of her gratitude followed him with eager

haste, and would have pressed to her heart the menial hand which had been uplifted to rescue her boy from the wicked violence of his father.

It was upon this last hint that Courval spake his final insinuation, and displayed his masterpiece of art; and by betraying to the afflicted Countess the real sex and condition of the being whom she had thus honoured with her gratitude, he trusted not only to insure it to himself, but to rouse all her feelings of womanly resentment against that husband by whose disguised mistress her dwelling was polluted. Deceived by the involuntary start with which Iölina marked her perception of the insult, Courval proceeded to hazard still stronger declarations; but he had already exhibited glimpses of his true character from behind his specious mask of candour, and the hour of danger was past for the injured wife.

"How have I remained blind to this urgent mischief!" she exclaimed; alluding, not as the Chevalier persuaded himself, to the sex of the pretended page, but to his own black projects.

"How could I overlook the certainty that no man breaks the confidence reposed in him, save for the furtherance of views as worthless as himself! Go! Monsieur de Courval;—for once your nets have been spread in vain. Had you spared this last toil,—this last fatal snare,—my dangerous self-security might have confirmed my peril. Go—sir;—henceforth no confidence can be between us."

"Katalin," said the unhappy Countess Lingotski, when she retired that night to her sleepless pillow. "I am bent upon leaving the defilement of these walls; Szent Miklós is no longer an abiding place for me or mine. My child is exposed to the dishonour of vile blows;—myself to association with the base and worthless. I do not ask thee to follow my fallen fortune, my good girl;—to doubt thy will were to slander the blood of Mariska which flows so warmly in thy heart. But thou knowest the country,—the temper of the vassals,—say! what chance hath thy wretched mistress of safe-conduct from the castle?"

"By boldly claiming her free right to go and

come," said the high-minded Katalin, falling on her knee, and kissing the hand of Iölina in renewal of her faithful adherence. "Shall the gracious Countess of Lingotski depart in the watches of the night, under cover of the darkness, like an evil-doer and a cast-away? Away with the thought! Throw back in his teeth the misguided ill usage of the lord of Szent Miklós, and depart from his gates as beseemeth his lawful wife, and the innocent mother of his heir."

"Alas! good girl,"—replied Iölina patiently, "thy unbending counsels would undo me. My right to come and go is indeed indisputable; but the right to convey from his father's dwelling the child of my sorrow, resteth not in my feeble hand. By stratagem, not force or outcry, must I achieve my end; and rescue my boy from evils I dare not myself encounter. But say he were once removed beyond the bounds of the domain, say that our flight had even proved secure and secret, whither should we direct our wanderings,—where shape our desolate course? I have no home, Katalin; no friend to shew pity to my babe and me."

"Danger and sorrow, madam, lend grace to the lowliest shelter. You have long known me the affianced wife of Szava, the Count's Sclavonian henchman,—you have long known Szava as a good and trusty and devoted servant to your house. He would peril *much* to serve you, lady;—*all* to retain the gratitude of Katalin. If you would indeed win by stealth and as in shame from the castle, it is to him you must trust for guidance; and if you would seek the shelter of a roof whose lowliness may be beneath suspicion, and where loyal hearts may compass you around, and defend you in case of need, still none better than Szava can serve your will. His people dwell in the plains by Vanicza;—they are poor, but of gentle blood; and have learned to breathe your name with honour and gratitude."

"Alas! alas!" said the Countess, "were I disposed to accept your offer, what danger may I not bring upon the innocent household which yields shelter to my fated head."

"Said I not that they were noble, madam?"

observed Katalin, "and have therefore nought to fear at the Lingotski's hands? The earth they dig, though arid, is their own; the roof-tree under which they house, is theirs by a right as heritable as that which binds the castle of Szent Miklós to its prouder lord. The law which protects him, protects them also;—their rights are equal in the land."

"To-morrow," said the Countess, "there is a chasé, deep within the forest of Notrany. Lingotska and his guests depart at noon on a three day's absence;—he must not find me here on his return, Katalin, nor the trace of our recent footsteps on the path. Commune thou with Szava;—if his courage and devotion be equal to thine own, let fleet horses and a *fuhrwagen* wait beyond the bridge; no man will seek Lingotski's heir under its rude canvas shade; and by midnight to-morrow we may be far on our way."

She placed a heavy purse in the hands of Katalin as she spoke; and dismissing her for the night,—the last they were to spend in the gorgeous halls of Szent Miklós,—the Countess threw

herself beside the pillow of her boy, to find in the helpless gentleness of his sleeping face, fresh motives for her removal,—and in his open brow, consolations for the past and hopes for her future days.

"Thou wert born in affliction," she murmured, "best blessing of my heart! Thine infant lip was fed with bitterness, and the moans of my grieving became thy lullaby. But *love* was with thee in every hour, in every trial; and disease and pain appeared forgotten in the soothing of a mother's tenderness. Thou hast never known sorrow, Emerich! Oh, no!—despite thy forsaken infancy—despite the wrong which nature has wreaked on thy feeble frame, thou hast never known sorrow, my gentle boy! And now to see thee smitten,—spurned,—reviled!—thou, on whose ear no sounds should fall, save words of tenderness;—thou on whose frail limbs none save the hand of mercy should lay its touch,—thou, my Emerich, my own,—my only!—no! patience may not abide so dark, so deadly a perversion. We will go hence, boy,—*hence!* the meanest

shed upon the loneliest heath were a safer abiding place for thee than the guarded towers and splendid galleries of Szent Miklós. Sleep! my poor, dishonoured, injured child! thy head shall be henceforth pillowed in a lowlier but a happier home!

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by S. Manning & Co., London House Yard.